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PATRIOTIC FLURRY ...

Secondary school participants from Selangor and Federal Territories representing the Education Ministry rehearse for the upcoming 60th Merdeka Day.



Animation characters in National Day parade

> 26 popular local mascots to join celebration

KUALA LUMPUR: A contingent of 26 popular Malaysian animation characters will take part in the National Day 2017 parade here on Thursday.

The coordinator of the contingent, Nik Ramzi Nik Hassan, said the mascots were the main characters of 15 local animation companies.

“Our contingent is different from the others which are more serious and targeted at adults ... ours focuses on children,” he said.

The mascots to be featured include BoBoiBoy, Chuck Chicken, Kluang Man, Awang Khenit, Didi and Friends, as well as Chichi and Chacha, he added.

“Previously, we featured only 16 mascots, but 26 will be joining the parade at Dataran Merdeka this year, with the involvement of 200 participants including giant balloon operators and parade escorts,” he said at the National Day parade rehearsal at Dataran Merdeka here yesterday.

Nik Ramzi, who is also a National Film Development Corporation assistant creative and production director, said the animation segment would also showcase a National Day sing-and-dance routine, three giant balloons featuring characters, namely Ejen Ali, Omar and Ummi, as well



Colourful balloons are seen in Dataran Merdeka in preparation for the event.

as six tricycles.

“Spectators will also be shown a special National Day animation video. We are confident that the animation character mascots will be most sought after at the parade.

“This is the time that the public will get

to know the characters that they only get to watch on television,” he said.

In KANGAR, about 5,500 people making up 75 contingents from various agencies participated in a Perlis-level National Day 2017 parade rehearsal at the Tuanku Syed Putra Stadium.

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Merdeka memory lane: Tun Sambanthan

KUALA LUMPUR: Every Aug 31, the memory of Tun V. T. Sambanthan is kept alive for his role in the fight for Malaysia’s independence and uniting the plural society of the country.

In the countdown to National Day celebrations on Thursday, the late iconic leader of the Indian community is well-remembered by many, including the residents of Kampung Tun Sambanthan in Ayer Tawar, Perak.

The 45-year-old village located 14km from Sitiawan, has a unique historical value, having been named after the independence figure whose initials stood for Veerasamy Thirunyanasambanthan.

Sambanthan was the fifth MIC president.

Today, more than 700 people reside in Kampung Tun Sambanthan, with a majority of the villagers comprising the Indian community, while there is also an Indian Muslim family and two Chinese families.

Village head A. Jeganathan, 51, who was born and bred in Ayer Tawar, said four decades ago, Sambanthan distributed a portion of the land lots of the Ulu Ayer Tawar Estate, a rubber plantation, through the shares of the National Land Finance Cooperative Society (NLFCS) to the local residents.

“From the more than 242.8ha of estate land, 26.3ha was purchased and divided into 220 lots measuring a quarter acre each which were distributed to help the Indian community with the original purpose of improving their standard of living through plantation activities,” he told Bernama recently.

However, Jeganathan said, when the housing scheme was introduced, most of them chose to build houses on the land provided, while carrying out agricultural activities.

Sambanthan died in May, 1979, due to heart disease.

His death was a great loss to the country, and specifically, the Indian community. – Bernama

BRIEFS

TOLL DISCOUNTS

KUALA LUMPUR: Lingkaran Trans Kota Sdn Bhd (Littrak) has announced toll-free rides and discounts for highway users on Merdeka day. Its chief executive officer, Szally Saidi, said users of the Damansara-Puchong Expressway (LDP) can enjoy toll-free rides while Sprint Highway users will get a 20% discount for 24-hours beginning midnight. He said the incentives, with a total value of about RM899,319 were estimated to subsidise some 410,643 LDP and 155,357 Sprint users.

QURAN HOUR EVENT

PUTRAJAYA: The Merdeka #QuranHour, to be held for the first time in conjunction with the Merdeka Day celebrations on Aug 31, will be meaningful to all Muslims, said Malaysia Islamic Development Department Director-General Tan Sri Othman Mustapha. He said the programme, open to all, was aimed at giving the right perception towards the practice of reading the Quran, besides encouraging understanding and imbibing of its teachings. – Bernama

ANTI-CRIME OPS

MIRI: Anti-crime operations will be carried out to ensure an incident-free Sarawak-level National Day 2017 celebration in Bintulu on Thursday. Bintulu police chief Supt Zailanni Amit said the operations would be targeted at drug addicts, traffickers and pick-pockets as well as traffic offenders including illegal motorcycle racers. Additionally, police will be on the lookout for people carrying inappropriate banners and setting off illegal fire crackers, he said yesterday. – Bernama

FREE FROM DRUGS

SEREMBAN: The concept of independence does not merely refer to a nation free of colonial rule, but also includes liberating people, especially the younger generation from the nation’s number one enemy, drugs. Negri Sembilan National Anti-Drug Agency (Nada) director Ismail Ahmad Khairi said the agency played an important role to ensure the community is free of drug abuse. “We are considered a centre for liberating addicts, to free them from drug addiction.” – Bernama

‘Registration dependent on visitor hits’

▶ FROM FRONT PAGE

Salleh said news portals should not be free from the law and should be held responsible for their publications.

“What is wrong for traditional media is also wrong for online media because the (product) is the same, both produce news.

“Traditional media is liable under the law if they breach existing laws, so should online portals.

“Online media should ensure whatever they publish does not affect national security and good relations between races. We want online portals to be responsible,” he added.

“There is no problem in giving opinions or constructive criticisms but if there is content that can affect national security, religious and racial relations, then it cannot be accepted,” he said.

Although he did not elaborate on the proposals, Salleh said one of the factors is how the number of views a portal receives.

“Not all sites or portals will be required to register. For instance, if the portal only receives 5,000 visitors in a day, then there is no need to register.

“We will look at the number of visitors and hits received by the portals to see which one qualifies to be registered. In Singapore, it is over 50,000.”

He did not say if the proposal will also include amending the Communications and Multimedia Act (CMA) 1998.

Salleh said the Cabinet has formed a task force, comprising the attorney-general, Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Khalid Abu Bakar and Minister in the Prime Minister’s Department Datuk Seri Azalina Othman Said, to submit recommendations to the government.

In March last year, Deputy Home Minister Datuk Nur Jazlan Mohamed had revealed that the government was studying laws to regulate news portals, which involves amending the CMA.

Previously, all print media had to renew their printing permits with the Home Ministry annually under the Printing Presses and Publications Act 1984.

The government removed the requirement in 2014 but it still has the power to suspend or revoke the printing permit at any time.

Meanwhile, The Malaysian Insight news portal head Jahabar Sadiq said it was premature to comment on the matter until the finer details of the proposal were disclosed and explained.

Malaysiakini editor-in-chief Steven Gan said he was also waiting for details of the proposal to be revealed.