

## DEEP PATRIOTISM

# MERDEKA EXCITEMENT IS BACK

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Malaysians fondly remember past celebrations, look forward to first big bash since pandemic began

## KUALA LUMPUR

**T**HE sound of the roaring aircraft during the fly-past for the Independence Day celebration at Dataran Merdeka in 1998 remains the most exciting moment and fondest memory for Izham Syazwan Ibrahim, 31, a shipping executive.

It was 24 years ago and he was only 7 years old then, but the memory lives on.

“The atmosphere of the celebration ignites patriotism, a feeling that is deeply etched in my mind.

“I was impressed with the strength and capabilities of our security forces. During the fly-past, I was overwhelmed with emotion, it aroused a patriotic feeling,” he said.

And, with the return of the Independence Day celebration this year, Izham, who has two children, said he was really excited to celebrate the occasion again at Dataran Merdeka on Wednesday after not being able to do so for four years.

Most important, he said, his children Muhammad Izham Syazwan, 5, and Kauthar Izham Syazwan, 3, would also get to feel



A bird's eye-view of the National Day parade rehearsal at Dataran Merdeka in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. (Inset) Royal Malaysian Air Force fighter jets flying in formation. BERNAMA PIX

the excitement as he would bring them to Dataran Merdeka to witness the celebration.

Kuala Lumpur-born Izham said the Independence Day celebration at Dataran Merdeka gave him a nostalgic feeling.

“It has become mandatory for me to bring my children to witness the celebration at the square and I will continue to do so.”

Sharing the nostalgic feeling was digital marketing specialist V. Kavinraj, 31, who was happy that the Independence Day parade would be back, and he was excited to go to Dataran Merdeka to witness the celebration.

“My parents are the ones responsible for encouraging me since young to participate in Independence Day celebrations, and over time, it has become an annual activity for us,” he said.

Kavinraj said he and his friends would also fly the Jalur Gemilang on their car and fly the flag at their homes to enliven the national month with the spirit of patriotism.

“As a Malaysian, I am very proud of the uniqueness of Malaysia, with its multi-racial, multi-cultural and multi-religious society living in harmony. Even my overseas friends are im-

pressed by this,” he said.

Meanwhile, Research Centre for History, Politics and International Affairs chairman Associate Professor Dr Mohd Samsudin said that with the country not been able to celebrate Merdeka on a grand scale for the past two years due to the Covid-19, he believed this year's celebration would make Malaysians more appreciative of the meaning of independence.

“During the colonial era, we were also not free, the people suffered, life was difficult and when I look back, there are things related to Covid-19 that reminded

me of the past, including how the community came together and helped those who were affected,” he said.

The 2022 Independence Day this Aug 31 would be celebrated in a grand manner at Dataran Merdeka.

The last time Independence Day was celebrated at the site was in 2017. Dataran Merdeka became a historic location that saw the Union Jack being lowered and the Jalur Gemilang raised for the first time in the country in 1957.

Since then, it had become the common place to hold Independence Day parades. **Bernama**