

# Patriotism in the digital era

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*Students of SMJK Chung Hwa Wei Sin, in traditional attire, holding up the Jalur Gemilang in Kuala Terengganu on Friday. PIC BY MOHD SYAFIQ AMBAK*

**LETTERS:** In 1997, the corridors of Institut Teknologi Mara, now known as Universiti Teknologi Mara, echoed with the sounds of students engrossed in their studies.

As the clock struck midnight, an anthem everyone in Malaysia knew and loved would play on the radio: *Negaraku*.

Students would stand to attention, heads held high, with no other distractions, showing how profoundly ingrained patriotism was from an early age.

Malaysians have traditionally felt a sense of national pride stemming from the nation's combination of diverse nationalities, cultures and customs.

However, with the rise of the Internet age, the dynamics of displaying national pride have changed.

The world has shrunk into a global village, which has many benefits, but presents new hurdles to showing national pride.

In the era of social media, the nightly ITM tradition of standing for the national anthem may seem archaic. The principles that used to define what it meant to be a Malaysian have taken a back seat.

Have patriotic principles diminished in the digital era, or have they only changed form?

The Internet provides a plethora of outlets for Malaysians to express their patriotism.

The traditional channels for displaying national pride have given way to the more modern ones of social media campaigns, online forums and digital platforms.

Mind you, sharing Malaysia's history, culture, and different traditions with a worldwide audience has helped raise Malaysia's profile internationally.

Furthermore, the Internet era has allowed Malaysians to connect with one another, have conversations, and work together on projects that show their pride in Malaysia.

National Day this year will focus on the message of Malaysia Madani: Tekad Perpaduan Penuhi Harapan (Malaysia Madani: Determination in Unity, Fulfilling Hope).

It serves as a timely reminder that little acts of patriotism are more meaningful than huge ones in the digital world.

It's a reminder that our nation's principles have persisted even as the means we show our patriotism have changed.

Finally, as Malaysia celebrates another year of independence, it's essential to remember that the digital age, with all its perplexities, also presents opportunities.

This is an opportunity to reimagine what it means to be a patriotic Malaysian and to celebrate the country's cultural heritage while looking to the future.

So, as the country prepares to celebrate National Day, think about <sup>[1]</sup><sub>SEP</sub> how the Internet might symbolise national pride, love, and unity in the future.

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**The views expressed in this article are the author's own and do not necessarily reflect those of the New Straits Times**

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