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AUGUST 31, 2015

## Caught **blackmailing** Morocco king

PARIS: Two French investigative journalists were charged with blackmail for demanding €2 million (RM9.1 million) from the king of Morocco not to bring out a book purportedly containing damaging revelations about the monarch, legal sources said Saturday.

Eric Laurent and Catherine Graciet were working on a book about King Mohammed VI, which is due for release early next year.

They were arrested in Paris on Thursday after a meeting with a Moroccan official at which they allegedly accepted payments of €40,000 each.

The Moroccan government claims that was the payment for the first instalment demanded by the authors in exchange for not bringing out their book.

The French judicial source said the journalists had been charged with blackmail and extortion.

They were released on bail,

but are restricted from talking to each other or parties involved in the case.

Eric Dupond-Moretti, a lawyer for the Moroccan government, told France's RTL radio that 68-year-old Laurent contacted the royal palace in July, saying he was writing a book about Mohammed VI.

The journalist allegedly demanded €3 million initially, but reduced the figure after further negotiations. - AFP

## Celebrate with

# 1 HEART, 1 SPIRIT



**EXCITED ...** Participants in traditional costumes in celebratory mood after the National Day full-dress rehearsal at Dataran Merdeka on Saturday. *theSun* wishes all Malaysians Happy National Day.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak in his National Day address yesterday said:

- The country belongs to everyone so people should not let any **'PUPPET MASTER'** or traitors destroy it.
- The government **TOTALLY REJECTS** street demonstrations: People can judge it through the polls box in the next general election.
- Malaysia is not a failed state or bankrupt as some alleged, as it is still stable with **STRONG FUNDAMENTALS**.
- Gross Domestic Product (GDP) has **RISEN** by 47.7% since 2009 (to 2014) after National Transformation Policy launched.
- Economy still on **RIGHT TRACK** and country remains competitive, standing at 12th place among 60 countries last year.

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