

10 MAY 1996

Umno-Square

MERDEKA SQUARE AGAIN WITNESSES MALAY UNITY

KUALA LUMPUR, May 10 (Bernama) -- Merdeka Square, formerly known as Selangor Club Padang, again became witness to the massive rally of the Malay party Umno. It used to be the venue for the Malays to express the spirit of independence in the early days when the nation was freed from the colonial rule.

Shouts of "Hidup Umno! Hidup Malaysia" (Long live Umno! Long Live Malaysia!) could be heard from the thousands of Umno members who had flocked to the square to celebrate the party's 50th anniversary together with their leaders.

The beat from 13 `rebana ubi' (drums) symbolising the 13 states in Malaysia reverberated the square as soon as Umno President Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad arrived at 8.50 pm.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Prime Minister, accompanied by Umno leaders was given a red-carpet welcome for the grand and colourful event.

Representatives of main political parties from 12 countries including Indonesia, Singapore, South Africa, Bosnia, China, Thailand, Vietnam, North Korea, the Philippines, Iraq, Cambodia were also present to honour the historical event.

The event started with the handing over of the flag carried by four representatives of the Umno Youth movement who came from the four corners of the country to represent every strata of Malay youths.

The Four-Corner Umno Youth Run started earlier this month and involved 16,000 members of the Umno Youth movement including leaders at the state level who carried the flags in turns throughout the relay run to the federal capital from the north, south, east and Sabah.

Dr Mahathir delivered his message for more than an hour which among others stressed on the need to unite and cooperate with the other races to fulfil the objectives of independence.

His poem, "Perjuangan yang Belum Selesai" (Unfinished Struggle) was again recited, but this time by Ngasri Sain, an RTM commentator, which touched thousands of spectators.

The celebration ended with video clip presentation on Umno's struggles from its formation right to the present era under the leadership of Dr Mahathir, followed by choir rendition of the song "Malaysia Tanahairku" and the national anthem "Negaraku". -- BERNAMA

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