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Events at Menara KL draw the crowd

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - While the main National Day celebrations were concentrated at Dataran Merdeka, little pockets of celebrations marking the day were also held in their own little patriotic ways.

One such place was the Menara Kuala Lumpur. Families mostly made up the long queues at the tower's main level as they waited to get tickets to the top.

Others also registered themselves for competitions organised by the management and its tenants, like a treasure hunt, karaoke singing, drawing and ice-cream eating competitions.

Young and old worked together in groups for the top prizes in the treasure hunt co-organised by Coca-Cola. Prizes totalled RM5,600.

Twenty singers tried their talents in the karaoke singing competition to grab 16 prizes sponsored by the Seri Angkasa revolving restaurant.

The holiday crowd cheered contestants amid Jalur Gemilang decorations at the tower's open stage on the main level.

McDonald's also chipped in, sponsoring the drawing competition for children aged four to 12.

The concluding event at the tower's first National Day celebration since its opening last year was the Baskin Robbins ice-cream eating competition, which was followed by a prize-giving ceremony.

Meanwhile, Bernama correspondent Neville D'Cruz reports from Melbourne that Malaysian groups, diplomatic and consular staff and students throughout Australia today celebrated, in a variety of functions, Malaysia's 40th National Day.

It was "open house" at the Malaysian High Commission in Canberra where hundreds of staff and students joined High Commissioner Datuk Adnan Othman in prayers and celebrations.

Consular staff in the main cities of Australia gathered at their Dewan Malaysia for the raising for the Malaysian flag and food fairs.

Malaysian student groups who could not travel to State capitals held their own parties on campuses.

About 520 Malaysians and Australians held a Merdeka Ball in Brisbane. It was hosted by the Australia Malaysia Business Council, Queensland (AMBCQ) and attended by Queensland Premier Rob Borbidge, Malaysian Deputy High Commissioner Halimah Abdullah, Opposition Leader Peter Beattie and Queensland Trade Minister Doug Slack.

In his welcoming speech, AMBCQ president Dr Peter Yeoh Tiong Yong said Malaysia had been blessed by visionary Prime Ministers, but the greatest successes and achievements had been under Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"Dr Mahathir has been the driving force, the inspiration, the visionary, the architect, the planner of what Malaysia is today. He is indeed a dynamic personality, much admired at home and abroad for his great achievements in making Malaysia a progressive and modern society," Yeoh, formerly of Klang, said.

Halimah told the gathering, which included about 120 Malaysian students, that functions like the Brisbane Ball would "undoubtedly provide an avenue for closer contacts and relations between Malaysians and Australians".

Borbidge said Malaysia was "already a role model for social and economic development among other countries. It is certainly a country from which we in Queensland can draw useful lessons."

Beattie recalled the many visits he and his wife had made to Malaysia

where his sister lived for many years.
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