

30 AUG 1997

Merdeka-flag

MAHATHIR GIVES NAME TO NATIONAL FLAG

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 30 (Bernama) -- The Malaysian flag which is the symbol of pride to the people all these years was officially named "Jalur Gemilang" just before midnight in conjunction with the 40th National Day celebrations.

The Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir announced the name before thousands of people who had thronged the Merdeka Square since late afternoon to participate in the historic event.

Prior to that, Dr Mahathir was presented with the national flag by participants of the Flag Run, Patriotic Torch Run and Motorthon.

Shouts of "Merdeka" vibrated through the night air as the flag was hoisted for the ceremony followed by the national anthem.

The Malaysian flag, which originated from the Malay Federation flag, was officially flown on Sept 16, 1963 to mark the birth of a new nation.

The inclement weather did not dampen the spirit of the crowd as they waited for the giant clock at Bangunan Sultan Abdul Samad to strike midnight to mark the entry of Aug 31, the National Day.

The "Malam Merdeka" celebrations at the square started at 8.45pm with various cultural performances organised by the Culture, Arts and Tourism Ministry.

The navy, army and federal reserve gave a special performance to the crowd who were also enlightened with a documentary entitled "Dairi Merdeka", outlining events leading to Independence. Artistes like Siti Nurhaliza, Zainal Abidin and Datuk S.M Salim were also on hand to entertain the crowd.

There were also traditional arts like makyong, wayang kulit and dikir barat as well as sketches by comedians which kept the crowd in stitches.

They were also entertained to a firework display which momentarily lit up the night sky over Kuala Lumpur.

Also present were wife of the Prime Minister Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali and several cabinet minister. --BERNAMA

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