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Art competition draws 12,000 pupils

SEA OF CHILDREN ... About 12,000 children convened yesterday at Stadium Putra in Bukit Jalil, Kuala Lumpur, for the nation's biggest ever art competition.

The children, seated on the arena floor, engrossed in their compositions, were participants of the Sukom-Ministry of Education-Milo Children's Art Competition 1998.

Set to enter the Malaysia Book of Records, this record-breaking feat had the indoor stadium teeming with children, teachers, parents, officials and Sukom volunteers.

The overwhelming response to the competition even forced last-minute entrants to work on their art pieces in the corridor outside as the arena could only accommodate some 11,000 children.

Open to schools throughout the nation, the competition drew the participation of more than 400 primary schools, with the majority of entrants from Selangor, Kuala Lumpur and Negri Sembilan.

To the reverberating cries of "Malaysia Boleh!" by the children, the 75-minute competition began at 9.30am.

Themed "KL '98 The 16th Commonwealth Games - Malaysia Boleh", the competition was split into two categories, Category A for children in Standards 1 to 3 and Category B for Standards 4 to 6.

During the selection process by judges from the National Art Gallery and LimKokWing Institute of Creative Technology, the children were treated to a variety of performances.

Among the highlights were Sekolah Kebangsaan Vivekananda's band formations, an endearing performance by five and six-year-old gymnasts from the Chinese Young Children's Basic Gymnastics Delegation from China and a Scottish dance by the Sekolah Tinggi Setapak's bagpipe troupe.

Other performances delivered were by the Federal Academy of Ballet dancers, Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Subang Jaya choir, the Malaysian Gymnastics Federation and the Kuala Lumpur Dance Theatre.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali who launched the competition, later awarded hampers worth more than RM100 each, to the five winners of each category.

Mohd Zaril Abdul Razak of Sekolah St John (2), emerged the winner of Category A, while Tung Fai Yee from Sekolah Rendah Jenis Kebangsaan (C) Choong Wen, Kuala Lumpur, was winner of Category B.

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