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## Celebrating Prophet's birthday in joyous mood

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Prophet Muhammad's birthday was celebrated in a joyous mood today although on a moderate scale, with calls to emulate the Prophet's lifestyle and teachings.

Themed Kesejahteraan Negara Tanggungjawab Kita (Nation's Harmony, Our Responsibility), some 12,000 Muslims took part in the procession from Dataran Merdeka to Panggung Anniversary here.

A total of 250 contingents representing government departments and agencies, institutions of higher learning, religious bodies, non-governmental organisations, private sector and schools displayed banners and joined in a march past.

Later, at Pusat Islam, the celebration began with a Quran recital by Mimi Munawarah Abdul Majid, who recently won the National Primary Schools' Quran Reading Competition.

Present at the ceremony were Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Dr Abdul Hamid Othman, Institute of Islamic Advancement Malaysia director-general Brig-Jen (rtd) Datuk Abdul Hamid Zainal Abidin and several Cabinet Ministers.

Making the call at the Maulidur Rasul gathering, Dr Mahathir told Muslims to go back to basics and follow the example set by the Prophet Muhammad if they wanted to be successful in life.

In conjunction with the celebration, the Prime Minister presented the Maulidur Rasul award to 10 people including a non-Muslim, from government and non-governmental organisations for their services and contributions to society.

They were Kapt Suhaidi Saad, Sarjan Mejar Abdul Latif Harun, Norsiah Saod, Md Nayan Salleh, Saim Abdul Aziz, Mohd Noh Mohamad, Hussin Abd Hamid, Aziz Ismail, Muniandy Doraisamy and Mohd Omar Yaakob.

They received a plaque and certificate each.

The five best groups under various categories for the procession were the Primary Industries Ministry (public sector), the Silat Cekak Association (NGOs), City Hall (statutory bodies), Tenaga Nasional Berhad (private sector) and the National Skills Institute (for the institutions of higher learning category).

In Sibuluan, the Yang di-Pertua Negeri Tun Ahmad Zaidi Adruce Muhammed Noor urged Muslims to be sensitive and wary of outside elements out to disrupt the country's economy and unity.

"As Muslims, we must defend and love our country. We must make efforts to show that we are responsible citizens, always prepared to support the Government we elected," he said during the rally.

In Negri Sembilan, the Regent Tunku Naquiyuddin Tuanku Ja'afar joined Muslims in the celebrations at the Seremban Municipal Council Hall.

More than 5,000 Muslims from government departments, the private sector, voluntary organisations and schoolchildren joined in the celebrations.

Among those present were the Undang Luak Sungai Ujong, Jelebu and Johol; Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohamad Isa Abdul Samad; State Legislative Assembly Speaker Datuk Hamdan Mohamad; State Exco members and senior government officials.

In Malacca, the Yang di-Pertua Negeri Tun Syed Ahmad Shahabuddin and Chief Minister Datuk Seri Abu Zahar Isnin led the procession of about 7,000 people from the Kubu Stadium to the Al-Azim mosque.

The procession went on as scheduled despite intermittent rain. The route

included Jalan Munsyi Abdullah and Jalan Tamingsari.

Abu Zahar in his speech said there was a need by Muslims to practise good and noble values such as love and care for one another.

In Kota Kinabalu, about 3,000 Muslims joined in a three-kilometre procession from the Padang Merdeka to the State Mosque to mark the occasion.

Participants had gathered at the Padang Merdeka to listen to a religious talk and nasyid presentations.

Among those present were the Yang di-Pertua Negeri Tun Sakaran Dandai, his wife Toh Puan Rukaiyah Panglima Abdullah, Chief Minister Tan Sri Bernard Dompok and State Cabinet Ministers.

In Penang, principal of Sekolah Agama Tuan Majid, Abdullah Abdul Rahman, received the Maulidur Rasul award from the Yang di-Pertua Negeri Tun Dr Hamdan Sheikh Tahir.

The 75-year-old religious scholar received RM1,000, a letter of commendation and RM750 worth of books from Hamdan during the State-level celebration attended by about 3,000 Muslims at the Bayan Baru mosque.

Also present were Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Mohd Shariff Omar, State Legislative Assembly Speaker Datuk Yahya Abdul Hamid, State Mufti Hassan Ahmad and several State dignitaries and their wives.

In Kuala Terengganu, the Sultan of Terengganu urged the people to emulate the examples of Prophet Muhammad in doing good deeds since such values could help generate a loving society.

These included paying visits to relatives, neighbours and friends, and carrying out tasks collectively.

The Ruler said this to about 2,000 representatives from different government agencies who had gathered for the celebration at Wisma Darul Iman.

In Kuantan, Pahang Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohamad Khalil Yaakob said the State Government had its own programme in tackling the current economic problems, including raising food production under the Pahang Food Production Enhancement Plan.

Speaking at the State-level celebrations at the State Convention Hall, he said that under the plan, efforts would be made to develop nine food production parks and 35 nucleus orchards on a commercial scale.

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