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Celebrations in State capitals too

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - The Barisan Nasional silver jubilee celebrations were held tonight in the various State capitals with gatherings, renditions of patriotic songs, cultural shows and fireworks display.

The gatherings were linked via live telecast to the main celebrations at the National Stadium in Bukit Jalil.

In Kangar, over 10,000 people braved the rain at the Utama Stadium to join the celebrations.

Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim called on members of BN component parties to close ranks in the face of new challenges posed by those who were bent on causing dissension among the people.

The audience followed the live telecast of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's speech on a giant screen set up in the stadium. This was followed by a fireworks display.

In Penang, about 3,000 BN supporters also braved the rain to congregate at the Esplanade.

A medley of patriotic songs kicked off the celebrations.

Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Khoon, State Executive Council members, State Assembly members and community elders were among those present.

Koh thanked the people for their continued support to the BN.

In Sungai Petani, about 500 people gathered at the night market site for the anniversary celebrations.

They were joined by Menteri Besar Tan Sri Sanusi Junid, State Executive Council members and members of BN parties.

The celebrations were preceded by a cultural show comprising music and dances from all ethnic groups.

In Kota Kinabalu, about 4,000 leaders and members of the nine BN component parties in Sabah packed the Magellan Sutera Harbour Resort ballroom to celebrate the anniversary.

The celebration began at 7.15pm with a presentation by several singers, followed by the recital of a poem composed by Dr Mahathir entitled Perjuangan Yang Belum Selesai by Berita Harian photographer Datu Ruslan Sulai.

Chief Minister and State BN chairman Datuk Seri Osu Sukam said the people should be thankful for the prevailing unity and harmony in the State brought about by the BN Government.

In Malacca, State Barisan Nasional chairman and Chief Minister Datuk Seri Abu Zahar Isnin said the BN was not a "seasonal party" unlike the Barisan Alternatif which was formed only to face the general election.

"The BN, being a comprehensive and efficient entity, is serious about taking care of the people and stability of the nation.

"The Opposition parties, however, are only keen to keep their 'marriage of convenience' to face the election."

He was addressing about 3,000 State BN party leaders and members at a gathering in Dewan Pay Fong tonight.

In Kuantan, about 8,000 people were at the Sukpa Stadium in Bandar Indera Mahkota.

Among them were Menteri Besar Datuk Adnan Yaakob who is also the Pahang Umno liaison committee chairman and other Barisan Nasional party leaders.

Adnan urged the people to maintain unity and ensure continued growth of the country.

In Johor Baru, about 10,000 people gathered at the Johor Baru City Council indoor stadium.

Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman said the BN could once again expect a clean sweep of the State and parliamentary seats, adding that the people were fully behind BN.

In Ipoh, 20,000 people gathered at the Stadium Indera Mulia.

Menteri Besar Tan Sri Ramli Ngah Talib urged the people to return the mandate to the BN Government in the coming polls.

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