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Walk for the Nation

DR MAHATHIR HEADS HISTORIC WALK IN MALAYSIA'S BID FOR ASIAD 2006

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 6 (Bernama) -- Malaysia recorded another historic event when Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad led more than two million people in the simultaneous "Walk for the Nation" to reflect its wholehearted offer to host the Asian Games in 2006.

It was yet another significant entry in the "Malaysian Book of Records" with the biggest number of people from all walks of life and age groups taking part in the walk simultaneously from 8am throughout the country.

A total of 12,000 people joined the Prime Minister in the "Walk for the Nation" at the Taman Tasik Titiwangsa here.

The Prime Minister was already at Taman Tasik Titiwangsa at 7.30am.

The Prime Minister, Federal Ministers including Youth and Sports Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin also took part in aerobic dances before joining in the walk which began at the same time from 293 locations in 116 districts nationwide.

Several other side events were also held such as a lucky draw, presentation by artistes and traditional music shows.

Muhyiddin said the response from the people had been beyond expectations.

"I am proud of the people's solid support for Malaysia's bid to host the games," he said.

Apart from Malaysia, the other countries which are bidding to host the Asiad 2006 are China (Hong Kong), Uzbekistan, India, Syria and Qatar.

The Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) will vote next year to select the host for the Asiad 2006.

In SABAH, Chief Minister Datuk Osu Sukam led more than 200,000 people in the state in the "Walk for the Nation".

In the state capital of Kota Kinabalu some 30,000 people joined Osu in a 3KM walk from Padang Merdeka. They walked through several areas in the city before returning to the padang.

The Chief Minister said the big participation of people in the event reflected the Sabah people's solid support for the national leadership.

This event has strengthened people's unity in Sabah and nationwide, Osu said.

Also taking part was Sabah Minister of Youth and Sports Development Datuk Rubin Balang who is the chairman of the main committee of the campaign.

In SARAWAK, Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Amar Dr George Chan led more than 170,000 in the state in the Walk for the Nation.

In Kuching City, 26,000 people gathered in front of the State Assembly Building and walked three kilometres to the Stadium Negeri in Petra Jaya.

Dr George Chan said Malaysia had achieved many successes such as building its own car, erecting the tallest buildings in the world, launching its own satellite (Measat) and was getting ready its Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC).

"From the aspect of organising big events, our country has proved its ability in organising the Commonwealth Games with excellence and also the Formula One race," Dr George Chan said.

Hence Malaysia was well placed to host the Asiad 2006 and the people in

Sarawak were fully behind it.

In SibU, Sarawak Minister of Infrastructure Development and Communication Datuk Wong Soon Koh led the walk from the SibU Prison Sportsfield.

SibU Resident Patrick Digat Engkassan was among the dignitaries who took part

In PERAK, Menteri Besar Tan Sri Ramli Ngah Talib and his wife Puan Seri Raja Noora Ashikin Raja Abdullah together with more than 40,000 people took part in a 4KM walk from the Perak Stadium in Ipoh.

Several artistes and novelists including Datuk Jins Shamsuddin, Rahim Maarof and A R Badul who are attending the 14th Malaysian Film Festival in Ipoh also took part.

At the Sultan Azlan Shah Airport area, employees of the Carsem Sdn Bhd factory and staff of the Royal Malaysian Air Fore also joined in the walk.

In KEDAH, more than 111,000 people took part in the Walk for the Nation from various points. In Alor Setar some 11,000 people were flagged off from the Stadium Darul Aman by State Executive Councillor for Tourism, Sports and Recreation Abdrul Rahman Ariffin. He said the Kedah Government would organise a 2000 Walk probably in March next year as a follow-up to the Walk for the Nation. The state government would seek sponsors for the event, he said.

Ariffin also said a state level "Gendang Silat Melayu" competition with participants drawn only from the Chinese community would be held next year following the success of such a competition at the Jerlun parliamentary constituency level yesterday. In the competition Air Hitam MCA emerged champion with the runners up being Kerpan MCA and Kodiang MCA. The Kedah Press Club also sent representatives to the walk. In Langkawi, some 10,000 people from all levels of society took part in the walk from the Dataran Lang.

Large crowds of tourists also joined in the fun.

In PULAU PINANG, Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon flagged off some 5,000 people from the Padang Kota Lama. The participants then walked five kilometres before returning to the padang.

A total of 78,000 took part in the Walk for the Nation in the state as a whole.

In Seberang Perai, Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Shariff Haji Omar flagged off the participants from the Sekolah Menengah Datuk Haji Ahmad Badawi at Kepala Batas.

In KELANTAN, a total of 168,000 people participated in the nationwide event.

Generally they were primary and secondary school children and began the walk from 29 locations in the state.

They also carried placards and banners proclaiming support for the country's bid to host the Asiad 2006.

In Kota Baharu, Member of Parliament Hajjah Ilani Datuk Isahak flagged off 12,000 walkers from Padang Perdana, Earlier they took part in aerobic dances.

Radio Malaysia Kelantan carried the event live. Also taking part in the walk were Federal Development Department Director Datuk Azman Abdul Rashid.

In MELAKA, more than 52,000 people took part in the walk which was held in three districts -- Melaka Tengah, Jasin and Alor Gajah.

In Melaka Tengah, Yang Dipertua Negeri Tun Syed Ahmad Shahabudin flagged off nearly 30,000 people in the 3KM walk from Padang Pahlawan, Bandar Hilir. The participants then walked via Jalan Merdeka and Jalan Kota

before returning to Padang Pahlawan.

Chief Minister Datuk Seri Abu Zahar Isnin, State Executive Councillors and state assemblymen were also present.

In Alor Gajah, more than 15,000 people took part and in Jasin some 7,000 joined in the walk.

In TERENGGANU, Menteri Besar Tan Sri Wan Mokhtar Ahmad headed some 40,000 in the walk which began at the Batu Burok beach in Kuala Terengganu.

State Executive Councillors, State Secretary Datuk Che Mat Jusoh and government officers also took part in the 3.1KM walk.

Wan Mokhtar said the overwhelming response from the people showed their high commitment to the government in its efforts to bring Asiad 2006 to Malaysia.

He said the people of various races in Terengganu fully supported Malaysia's bid to host the Asian Games in 2006.

In NEGERI SEMBILAN some 65,000 people took part in the walk. In Paroi, Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohamed Isa Abdul Samad together with 17,000 people took part in a 4km walk which began and ended at the Stadium Tuanku Abdul Rahman.

Mohamed Isa said the response to the walk reflected the solid support from all levels of society for Malaysia's bid to host the Asian Games in 2006.

Malaysia had proved its capability in organising world class events such as the Commonwealth Games, he said

"We are capable of organising the Asiad 2006 and also the Olympic Games two years later," he said.

The Menteri Besar's wife Puan Seri Hazizah Tumin also took part

In PERLIS, some 50,000 people from various races and age groups joined in the walk which started off from three locations.

Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim after flagging off the walkers from the Dataran Sena Indah in Arau joined his wife Datin Seri Shahsiah Mohamad Yassin in the walk.

In Kangar, the Member of Parliament for Kangar Mohamed Isa Sabu led the walk and in Padang Besar the walk began at the Sekolah Kebangsaan Kampung Salang.

In SELANGOR, some 15,000 people led by Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Abu Hassan Omar began a 2KM walk in Shah Alam.

They were part of the 106,000 people who walked for the nation in 10 districts in the state.

Abu Hassan also gave away prizes to winners of a lucky draw held in conjunction with the event.

The Menteri Besar said the big response from the people reflected their support for the country's bid to host the Asian Games in 2006.

In JOHOR, Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman said he was proud over the spirit and response of the people of Johor to the "Walk for the Nation" programme.

The response was overwhelming from people of all walks of life including those from the private sector, he told reporters after flagging off 30,000 people at the Dataran Bandaraya. He also joined in the walk.

He said the Johor private sector had donated RM340,000 to ensure the success of the programme and this was very much appreciated.

Among others taking part were the State Executive Councillor for Culture, Youth and Sports Dr Abdul Latiff Ahmad, State Secretary Datuk Dr Shahir Nasir and heads of department.

Abdul Ghani said 180,000 people in the state had registered to take

part in the walk to show support for Malaysia's bid to host the Asiad 2006.

The walk was held in all 40 state constituencies in Johor and in 14 locations in the Johor Baharu District.

Meanwhile more than 2,000 employees of the Information Ministry and their families took part in the "Walk for the Nation" throughout the country.

Of the total some 500 people including 60 from Bernama took part in a 3.5KM walk from Angkasapuri.

Eventhough the walk was not a competition still the response was good. There was also a lucky draw for the participants.

Information Ministry Secretary-General Datuk Zawawi Mahmuddin told reporters that the good response showed the people's support for Malaysia's bid to host the Asian Games in 2006.

"The participation is very satisfactory...eventhough on a weekend, moreover tomorrow is Deepavali and a long weekend with the balik kampung rush but still the Information Ministry staff are taking part including the hundreds in other venues nearest to them," he said.

-- BERNAMA

MNY AAM