

30 AUG 1999

Millennium-Launch

M'SIANS THROG TO NATIONAL STADIUM TO WELCOME NATIONAL DAY

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 30 (Bernama) -- Tens of thousands of Malaysians from all walks of life joined Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at the launching of "Malaysia's Centennial Towards A New Millennium" celebration at the National Stadium in Bukit Jalil here tonight.

Dr Mahathir and his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamad Ali arrived at the stadium at about 9.35pm in a Proton prototype car known as Cabriolet driven by the prime minister himself.

The event, broadcast live over RTM, is held in conjunction with Malaysia's 42nd National Day bash tomorrow, the last in this millennium.

The gathering at the 100,000 sitting-capacity stadium, which hosted the successful 16th Commonwealth Games in September last year, is a run-up to the celebration proper at the Merdeka Square in the heart of the city tomorrow.

Among the highlights of tonight's festivities are a video conference session between Dr Mahathir and all 13 Menteri Besar and Chief Ministers as well as a concert by local artistes.

Spectators and home viewers will also be entertained by a live telecast of cultural performances from all the states.

At the stroke of midnight, Dr Mahathir will raise the national flag "Jalur Gemilang" followed by the national anthem "Negaraku" and a dazzling firework display.

Dr Mahathir will then plant messages for the future generation in a time capsule to be opened on Aug 31, 2099.

This is the first time the official countdown to Aug 31 is held at the stadium, away from its customary venue at the Merdeka Square where revellers would gather near the clock tower at the Sultan Abdul Samad building.

This year's Merdeka Day celebrations carry the theme "Together Towards The New Millennium."

-- BERNAMA

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