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National Day celebration with a difference

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - While thousands of people joined the Merdeka Day celebrations at Dataran Merdeka, more than 300 elderly people celebrated the occasion differently by holding a food, karaoke and dance fair.

Held at the National Council of Senior Citizens Organisation Malaysia daycare centre in Setapak, the fair was to remind them of the day they were liberated as Malaysian citizens while raising funds for the upkeep of the centre.

The centre's committee chairman Datin Paduka Rosemary Chong said "We are grateful that the country has remained peaceful and we can still celebrate this special occasion."

"Although most of us especially those in the civil service are no longer a part of Government functions, we can group together to celebrate such important occasions in a different manner."

Maj (R) Habibah Baharom who is in her 60s said to the elderly community, the real meaning of "Merdeka" was togetherness, peace and unity.

Siew Pak Seng, 71, of PJ said he was happy to see the brilliant progress that the country had gone through as Malaysians celebrate the Merdeka Day each year.

"And we are happy to witness how the nation has developed under the leadership of past leaders from Tunku Abdul Rahman, Tun Abdul Razak to our present leader Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad."

Kua Kian Huat, 57, of Taman Setapak, said as the Government ensured that the country developed, it should also promote a caring society among the younger generation.

"It is important that we have a younger generation that takes care of the elderly," said Kua.

Kua is the regional director of a stationery company, Chung Poon Enterprise Sdn Bhd.

Former assistant commissioner of police Low Yew Hong, 70, who is now a treasurer of the centre said the senior citizens must also have a healthy and good quality life.

"A lot of old people are lonely and sometimes are faced with boredom.

"And functions like this provide them with the opportunity to widen their circle of friends and enjoy life better."

The day-care centre aims to raise at least RM20,000 during the fair.

Set up in May, the centre provides specialised care for the elderly with a comfortable environment while their children are at work.

It operates from 8am to 5pm from Monday to Friday with a daily charge of RM20 (inclusive breakfast, lunch and tea). It also has a senior citizen's club which currently has 120 members.

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