

30 AUG 1999

Millennium-State (Round-up)

SHOUTS OF "MERDEKA" REVERBERATED NATIONWIDE

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 30 (Bernama) -- Malaysians from all strata of society tonight converged in tens of thousands at various places nationwide to usher in the Malaysia Centennial Towards a New Millennium celebrations to welcome the 42nd National Day tomorrow.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad set the pace by launching the national-level celebrations at the National Stadium in Bukit Jalil here tonight attended by a 100,000 capacity crowd, mostly youths.

In IPOH, Perak Menteri Besar Tan Sri Ramli Ngah Talib launched the new millennium bash at the Ipoh City Council Square by hoisting the Malaysia flag "Jalur Gemilang." It was followed by a stage show "Malam Gema Merdekarama."

The events started at 9pm with the Perak Police Band playing music to songs and dances by local artistes and cultural performances of the various races.

The Orang Asli Seri Idayu Group from Kampung Perak in Parit also joined in the merry-making.

Some 5,000 people watched the video-conferencing between Dr Mahathir and Ramli on a giant screen pitched on the field.

Ramli also flagged-off 1,000 participants of the four-kilometre Friendly Run around Ipoh City at 11pm.

The runners returned to the starting grid at 11.58pm and handed over the Malaysia flag to Ramli who then hoisted it at the stroke of 12 midnight.

In ALOR SETAR, Kedah Menteri Besar Tan Sri Sanusi Junid attended the national flag raising ceremony at Medan Bandar opposite Balai Besar.

Before the "Jalur Gemilang" was hoisted, lights in the area were switched off for five minutes and at sharp 12 midnight, Sanusi cried out "Merdeka!" "Merdeka!" "Merdeka!" three times to a thunderous applause from the crowd.

Cultural performances and poem recitals then started.

Earlier, Sanusi attended "tahlil" prayers at Zahir Mosque here.

In KUALA TERENGGANU, the new millennium celebrations at Taman Syahbandar here were marked by Rodat and Ulek Mayang cultural shows performed by the state cultural troupe witnessed by more than 3,000 people.

Groups of children and teenagers were seen making their rounds around town on their bicycle flying the "Jalur Gemilang" with occasional shouts of "Merdeka."

The celebrations commenced at 7pm with "tahlil" prayers, "sembahyang hajat" (special prayers) and reciting of the Yassin prayers at Wakaf Tembesu mosque in Gong Badak attended by Menteri Besar Tan Sri Wan Mokhtar Ahmad, State Secretary Datuk Che Mat Jusoh and executive councillors.

Wan Mokhtar, who earlier participated in the video-conferencing with Dr Mahathir at the Telekom Training Centre in Rusila, later hoisted the "Jalur Gemilang" at Taman Syahbandar at 12 midnight sharp.

In SHAH ALAM, the celebrations kicked off as early as 8.30pm with the parade of 42 contingents comprising government departments at Dataran Shah Alam watched by more than 10,000 people.

Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Abu Hassan Omar also recited a poem titled "Di Gerbang Alaf Baru." (At The Brim of the New Millennium).

After the parade ended at 10pm, Abu Hassan proceeded to the State Secretariat Building for the video-conferencing with Dr Mahathir.

The carnival atmosphere continued with the performances of popular artistes like Ziana Zian, A.Razak and several others.

In KOTA BAHARU, some 5,000 people were treated to cultural performances especially dikir barat at the Sultan Mohamed IV Stadium here to usher in the 42nd National Day.

The spectators were also entertained to dare-devil stunts by motorbike riders.

Among those present were Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat, state executive councillors and State Secretary Datuk Wan Hashim Wan Daud.

A friendly football match was also held between state government staff and Kelantan Federal Development Department employees.

The state-level National Day celebrations will start at the stadium at 7am tomorrow.

In PULAU PINANG, Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon called on the people to be with the government to ensure the country's continued prosperity and peace.

He said their future and that of the country was in their hands and they must have the wisdom to decide their destiny.

Malaysians have achieved significant success based on the Malaysian spirit and the very spirit would propel them to attain excellence in the new millennium, he said when speaking at the state-level celebrations at Esplanade.

He said Malaysians were fortunate to have rational-thinking leaders who were able to tackle all challenges.

In his video-conferencing with Dr Mahathir, Dr Koh took the opportunity to introduce the "Burung Bayan" (parakeet), the mascot of the 2000 Malaysia Games (Sukma), to be hosted by Pulau Pinang next year.

-- BERNAMA

TM ES TS