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Nation celebrates Prophet's birthday

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - The Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah and Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Siti Aishah today led more than 20,000 Muslims in celebrating the birthday of Prophet Muhammad.

Held at Stadium Putra in Bukit Jalil, the celebration started at 8am with a procession by groups representing government departments, agencies, statutory bodies, schoolchildren and the private sector.

Among those present were Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his wife Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, and Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and his wife Datin Seri Endon Mahmood.

This year's celebration, themed Gratitude Sign of Strong Faith, also featured a theatrical performance on the life and death of Prophet Muhammad by the Kuala Lumpur Cityhall Cultural Troupe, Kumpulan Tunas Budaya, Sungai Besi Royal Military College and nasyid groups from local schools.

At the function, the King presented the "Maulidur Rasul 1421 Hijeriah Award" to 11 people for their contributions towards the prosperity and well-being of Muslims in the country.

In Kelantan, State Umno information chief Datuk Mustapa Mohamed led a procession of more than 1,000 people from the Bukit Bunga Shopping arcade to the Jeli Umno complex at Bukit Nangka.

Representatives from government agencies in Jeli including the Kelantan South Development Authority (Kesedar) and Kemas also participated in the procession.

In Kota Kinabalu, about 2,000 Muslims representing some 80 associations and organisations gathered at the Padang Merdeka at 7am to celebrate Maulidur Rasul.

The Yang di-Pertua Negeri, Tun Sakaran Dandai said Muslims in Malaysia should be thankful as they were able to carry out their religious duties without fear.

In Malacca, Chief Minister Datuk Wira Mohd Ali Mohd Rustam joined 5,500 Muslims in a procession to mark the celebration which started at the Kubu Stadium.

They later walked about 3.3km to the State Al-Azim Mosque.

Mohd Ali said all parties such as community leaders, religious scholars, heads of departments, teachers and parents should be more consistent in efforts to enhance the image of Islam.

In Kuantan, Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob joined about 1,000 Muslims at the State-level Prophet Muhammad' birthday celebrations at the Convention Hall.

The Sultan of Pahang, in his speech read by Adnan, urged leaders and knowledgeable people to identify ways to eliminate confusion on Islam which had resulted in a friction among the ummah.

In Kuala Terengganu, the Sultan of Terengganu urged Muslims to strengthen their faith and emulate the good values portrayed by the Prophet.

He said Muslims nowadays were faced with several problems including disunity, shallow knowledge, moral decay, and poverty.

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