

01 JAN 2001

New Year-Celebration

MAHATHIR JOINS NEW YEAR CELEBRATION AT KLCC

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 1 (Bernama) -- Kuala Lumpur welcomed the year 2001 with a series of colourful events although many city dwellers are still not back from their Christmas and Aidilfitri holidays in their kampungs.

Thousands of people thronged the Kuala Lumpur City Centre (KLCC), Bukit Bintang and Merdeka Square to bid farewell to 2000 and welcome 2001.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, accompanied by his wife Datin Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, arrived at the KLCC about an hour before midnight to witness a sky-jump at the Petronas Twin Towers.

The "Malaysian Sky Venture Trans Millennium Jump" featured 15 base jumpers including two Malaysians, Azizi Ismail dan Azlan Ismail.

Attempting a record-breaking feat, they jumped seconds before midnight from the 60th, 73th and 88th floors to touch down in the new year.

Dr Mahathir earlier went to the Bintang Walk area in Jalan Bukit Bintang for the 45th anniversary celebration of YTL Corporation.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, accompanied by his wife Datin Seri Hendon Mahmood, arrived at Bintang Walk later for the new year celebrations organised by YTL Corporation.

The highlights of the event, witnessed by a large crowd of Malaysians and foreign tourists, included a fireworks display and a show by tenors Fabio Sartori, Gegam Goryan and Warren Mok singing excerpts from famous Italian operas.

Abdullah wished the crowd "Happy New Year" and expressed the hope that 2001 would bring greater prosperity to Malaysians.

He joined in the countdown to midnight before shouting "Malaysia Boleh" three times.

At the Merdeka Square, the traditional venue for welcoming the new year, about 5,000 people gathered for the event.

Many were however disappointed to find that no special events had been arranged at the square unlike previously.

All eyes were at the clock at the Sultan Abdul Samad building as midnight approached, and the people ushered in the new year with loud cheers.

In KUALA TERENGGANU, about 100 people gathered in the rain at Taman Shah Bandar to greet the new year.

The PAS-led State Government did not organise any event to mark the arrival of 2001.

In PENANG, more than 60,000 turned up at the Esplanade to see out 2000 and welcome 2001.

Among them were Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon and Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir.

Youths and tourists were also seen celebrating the new year with street parties at several spots in Georgetown.

In KANGAR, most people chose to stay at home than to come to the town centre to celebrate the new year.

However, the local Siamese community marked the occasion with a singing competition in Padang Patani near here. Fifteen singers took part, singing Thai songs.

-- BERNAMA

SSA/FA/AD/NER/AYB/SLR SK