

Day festivities ends in grandeur

By SIMON KHOO

PORT DICKSON: It was truly a night to remember as people from all walks of life thronged Taman Kota Impian here for the closing of the month-long national-level Merdeka Day celebration yesterday.

To entertain the crowd, which started trickling in from 5pm, the Swakarya group sang several golden oldies and Indian hit song "Kuch Kuch Hota Hei."

At 9.15pm, the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Tuanku Syed Putra Jamalullail and Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Fauziah Tengku Abdul Rashid were received by Negri Sembilan Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohamed Isa Abdul Samad, Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Paduka Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir and Deputy Information Minister Datuk Mohd Khalid Yunus.

The show started with a rendition of the "Keragaman Malaysia" as dancers swamped the two stages. Two giant screens were earlier erected and the show was broadcast live on RTM1.

The event followed with the handing over of the Jalur Gemilang to the King who passed it on to a navy personnel to be hoisted.

Game show host Jalaluddin Hassan led the crowd with seven shouts of "Merdeka".

The estimated 3,000 people were entertained by singers such as Ahmad Jais, Siti Nordiana, Siti Nurhaliza, Valerie Wong and India group The Girls.

The highlight was a short documentary tracing the struggles of the four Malaysian Prime Ministers including Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad. At midnight, the King performed a gesture to close the event by re-inserting the keris into its casing. This was followed by a fireworks display and shouts of "Daulat Tuanku."