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Kelantan-Dinner

SULTAN AND MAHATHIR ATTEND "PEOPLE'S DINNER" AT PALACE GROUNDS

KOTA BAHARU, April 12 (Bernama) -- The Sultan and Raja Perempuan of Kelantan attended a "people's dinner" at the state palace grounds in Kubang Kerian tonight together with the people and federal government leaders led by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The dinner for 30,000 people, held in conjunction with the Sultan's 52nd birthday, made it into the Malaysia Book of Records for having the biggest number of guests and the biggest procession of birds.

Dr Mahathir witnessed the presentation of certificates for the two records to the organiser, the Kelantan People's Action Council, a non-governmental organisation.

The dinner, organised with the sponsorship of several major companies, was televised live by RTM on TV1.

Organising committee chairman Datuk Paduka Ibrahim Ali said the dinner was held to enhance unity among the people of Kelantan and uphold the royal institution.

Those present included Dr Mahathir's wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamad Ali, Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, Minister of Culture, Arts and Tourism Datuk Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir, Melaka Chief Minister Datuk Wira Ali Rustam and Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman.

Kelantan Umno chief Datuk Mustapa Mohamed and former chief Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah also attended the dinner.

The event started with the Sultan, Raja Perempuan and other members of the Kelantan royalty, as well as Dr Mahathir and Dr Siti Hasmah, being mounted on horse carriages along a 1.5km route from the Istana Mahkota to Istana Negeri.

The carriages were specially brought in from Lampang, Chiang Mai, northern Thailand.

The cabinet minister and chief ministers present joined in the procession by riding in specially decorated trishaws.

Also in the procession was a replica of the "petalawati" mystical bird that was 7.3 metres long and 6.1 metres wide.

In his speech, Dr Mahathir called on the people of Kelantan, which has been under PAS rule since 1990, to opt for a government that could bring development and prosperity to the state.

"I am sure the Kelantan people are aware that if we make an unwise choice, or make a selection out of feelings of anger, the choice will not benefit us," he said.

The Prime Minister said the federal government was always willing to assist Kelantan become a more developed state and thereby providing employment to its people.

"If even now we are able to provide Kelantan with an allocation that is not small, nearly RM4 billion every year, what more if we have a closer relationship with the state government," he said.

Dinner guests were also entertained by popular local singers including Siti Norhaliza and Nora.

There were also silat and traditional dance performances as well as a fireworks display.

Tonight's mammoth procession was the first such event in the state since PAS came to power.

The PAS state government, however, ignored the procession and dinner.

-- BERNAMA

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