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New Year celebrated with gusto

KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - Celebrations to usher in the second year of the third millennium continued into the wee hours throughout the country today, with revellers treated to dazzling fireworks displays and various performances.

In the Federal capital of Kuala Lumpur, thousands thronged the various venues to join in the celebrations to bid farewell to 2001 and welcome the New Year.

Joining them were Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, his wife Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali and Datuk Bandar Datuk Mohamad Shaid Mohd Taufik.

In Bukit Mertajam, the Seberang Prai Municipal Council (MPSP) Chingay team members displayed their skills in balancing the giant flag during the New Year Chingay procession at Taman Mutiara.

More than 15,000 people thronged the township to watch the procession, in which 17 chingay teams took part.

There were also lion and dragon dances and schoolband performances.

The procession started in Jalan Betik at 9am and ended in Jalan Tembikai at 11.30am.

Thousands were at the Esplanade in Padang Kota Lama in Georgetown to watch the fireworks.

In Kota Kinabalu, New Year celebrations were held at several popular spots. One area which attracted a large crowd was the Sutera Harbour Resort which organised a 'rave party'.

A countdown was held at Gaya Street, apart from Likas Bay, Tanjung Aru and other areas.

In Ipoh, thousands gathered at the Dataran Ipoh even though there was no countdown unlike other venues.

Revellers also gathered at the Ipoh Garden East entertainment area which houses about a dozen popular pubs and bistros.

Streets in the area, dubbed as Ipoh's 'Mini Bangsar', were turned into an open-air disco as patrons of the entertainment outlets partied until the wee hours.

In Johor Baru, some 300 revellers at the poolside countdown party hosted by Hyatt Regency Johor Baru had a splashing time ushering in the New Year.

On the stroke of midnight, there were simultaneous shouts of delight and 'panic' at the poolside as many were bodily lifted and plunged into the pool by friends and partners attending the 'Wet Wet Wild' all-night party.

Hundreds of balloons containing hotel accommodation and food vouchers were released as the clock struck 12. Some balloons ended up in the pool, and some party-goers made a dash for them to grab the attractive prizes being offered.

In Kuching, large gatherings were held at Padang Merdeka and Waterfront to hail the New Year.

In Malacca, more than 30,000 gathered at the State's new attraction, the 'Melaka Raya Walk' at Bandar Hilir, to witness the New Year countdown.

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