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12,000 turn up for three-day carnival

DENGKIL, Sun. - More than 12,000 people turned up for the three-day Paya Indah Wetlands carnival which began on Friday.

Today's programme started off with the Paya Indah Wetlands Cross Country Run which was flagged off by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad at 7.30am.

Visitors arrived as early as 7.30am. By lunchtime, there was a line of cars a kilometre long on the roadside leading to the entrance.

Groups of families and friends walked in the heat to catch a glimpse of the park's resident hippopotami and crocodiles, and the visiting elephant, tiger cub and orang utan brought in by the Department of Wildlife and National Parks.

Others hopped onto trams which took them from station to station to explore the sights and sounds.

Many rented bicycles and tandem bikes and biked around the park, trailing free balloons tied to their wrists.

People were also seen standing under fans set up by Tenaga Nasional Bhd, one of Paya Indah's sponsors, to cool off.

Many were surprised to see Dr Mahathir riding around the park on an electric tram, taking in the scenery of the park he launched a year ago.

Activities such as basket weaving, glass blowing, martial arts, fire fighting demonstrations, hot air balloon rides, batik painting and clown performances were on the agenda.

Many visitors, especially children and teenagers, had their faces painted with bright colours and designs.

The tantalising smells of barbequed corn, chicken and satay wafted through the air, and visitors ate their fill under tents.

Kite flying demonstrations were held throughout the carnival.

Many of the participants were members of Skyriders Malaysia, an organisation for passionate kitefly-ers.

"We are doing this to commemo-rate World Kite Day today, where the objective is to fly for peace. The theme this year is `One World, One Sky'," said Edmund Cheong Peck Huang, 23.