

31 AUG 2002

Merdeka-Celebration

THEIR MAJESTIES ARRIVE IN HORSE-DRAWN CARRIAGE

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 31 (Bernama) -- The Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Tuanku Syed Putra Jamalullail and the Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Fauziah Tengku Abdul Rashid attended the 45th National Day celebrations at the Merdeka Square this morning.

Unlike in previous years, Their Majesties arrived at the square in a carriage drawn by four horses and accompanying them were 21 mounted guards. Thousands of people who had gathered in front of the Sultan Abdul Samad Building since 6am cheered and clapped as the King and Queen alighted from the carriage.

Their Majesties watched the colourful National Day procession from a royal dais. Also present were the Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Cabinet Ministers and members of the foreign diplomatic corps.

Apart from strengthening the spirit of patriotism among Malaysians, the celebrations also gave a big boost to the national tourism industry.

The Merdeka Square reverberated with the beating of 1,584 drums by people representing the various communities in the country as cultural dancers in a panorama of colours danced their way along the procession.

Earlier on arrival at the square, Their Majesties were received by Dr Mahathir and Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali.

The King then inspected a guard of honour mounted by 102 officers and men of the First Battalion Royal Malay Regiment under the command of Major Ismail Osman.

The Jalur Gemilang was then raised as the National Day choir sang the "Negaraku". Seven students recited the Rukun Negara then led the crowd in shouts of "Merdeka" thrice. Seven persons from the various races then read out patriotic poem.

A total of 12,550 people from 51 contingents, 23 bands and 14 decorated floats from government agencies, non-governmental organisations and the private sector and uniformed organisations took part in the procession in front of the 105-year-old Sultan Abdul Samad Building. This was where the Union Jack was lowered for the last time in 1957 and the flag of the new independent nation was raised.

Fine weather conditions provided an opportunity for hundreds of revellers to pour into the city where they were joined by busloads of tourists.

The mingling of people in their colourful attire created a festive atmosphere in Kuala Lumpur.

For the third consecutive year "Keranamu Malaysia" (For you Malaysia) was chosen as the theme of the National Day celebrations.

Military aircraft flew past the square to honour the country on its 45th birthday.

In SEREMBAN, Negeri Sembilan, more than 30,000 people from all walks of life gathered at the Seremban Municipal Council Padang for the National Day celebrations. Seventy-four contingents from various organisations including universities and colleges and political parties took part in a procession through the town.

Also present at the celebrations were the Undangs of Jelebu, Johol, Rembau and Sungai Ujong and the Tunku Besar of Tampin, Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohamed Isa Abdul Samad and leaders of political parties.

In his National Day message, Mohamed Isa urged all races in Negeri

Sembilan to strengthen unity and friendship to ensure the country's stability.

He also advised young people to make good use of their time in schools, colleges and universities to gain knowledge to improve themselves and bring credit to the country.

In KANGAR, a colourful National Day procession was held with the focus on a 17-year-old lass from Phuket, Thailand. Her name is Wan Aishah Wan Nawawi, acclaimed as a member of the seventh generation of the family of Mahsuri, the legendary woman of Pulau Langkawi.

She was invited by the Kangar Municipal Council to join in the procession in a jeep.

The Regent of Perlis Tuanku Syed Faizuddin Syed Sirajuddin Putra Jamalullail and the Raja Puan Muda, Tuanku Lailatul Shahreen Khalil Akashah were also present. More than 25,000 people from 120 contingents took part in the procession.

In KLUANG, Johor, Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman addressing the National Day parade said collaboration, moderation and the spirit of tolerance should continue to be nurtured among the young generation.

"Promoting racial integration based on loyalty and patriotism will help create a united Malaysian nation," he said.

Earlier Abdul Ghani and other Johor dignitaries watched the parade and procession in which 120 contingents took part.

In IPOH, the National Day procession was held in front of the Dewan Bandaran Ipoh in which more than 15,000 people from 101 contingents representing government departments and the private sector took part.

The Raja Muda of Perak, Raja Nazrin Shah, Raja Di Hilir, Raja Jaafar Raja Muda Musa and Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Tajol Rosli Ghazali were among the dignitaries present.

Suhaimi Mior and Nuruzaida Zabri recited a poem entitled Keranamu Malaysia.

In ALOR SETAR, the Raja Muda of Kedah and Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Syed Razak Syed Zain attend the state level National Day celebrations at the Dataran Tunku.

Some 5,000 people braved the rain to watch the National Day procession in which 4,620 people took part with full enthusiasm.

The Kedah State Assembly contingent in which government and opposition members marched side by side drew applause from the crowd.

In LANGKAWI, various cultural events were held to mark National Day and the celebrations will be highlighted with a parade and procession on Monday.

In KUDAT, Sabah, 72 contingents from government agencies and the private sector took part in the state level National Day procession through the town.

Some 10,000 people watched the procession which ended at the Kudah Sports Complex.

Sabah Yang Dipertua Negeri Tun Haji Sakaran bin Dandai, his consort Toh Puan Hajah Siti Rukaiyah Panglima Abdullah, Chief Minister Datuk Chong Kah Kiat and his wife Datin Ivy Chong and State Cabinet Ministers were present.

A carnival atmosphere filled this small coastal town facing the Sulu Sea in the northern tip of Sabah, as thousands of people from other parts of the state gathered for the National Day celebrations.

In KUCHING, the National Day gathering in which 75 contingents took part was held at the Stadium Perpaduan, an indoor stadium, because of the haze problem.

The National Day celebrations were originally scheduled to be held in Sarikei in the Sarawak midwest but had to be moved to the indoor stadium in Kuching because of haze.

Sarawak Yang Dipertua Negeri Tun Abang Muhammad Salahuddin and state ministers were present.

In KUANTAN, more than 30,000 people took part in the Pahang level National Day celebrations at Kuantan Municipal Council Padang 1.

The Tengku Mahkota of Pahang, Tengku Abdullah, Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob and other dignitaries were present.

In MELAKA, more than 10,000 people from 111 contingents took part in a 2.6KM long procession which began in front of the National Independence Memorial at Bandar Hilir and passed through Jalan Kota, Jalan Gereja, Jalan Bendahara, Jalan Bunga Raya, Jalan Hang Tuah and ended at Stadium Hang Tuah.

In KOTA BAHARU, some 4,000 people took part in a National Day parade and procession at the Stadium Sultan Mohamed IV.

Kelantan Deputy Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Halim Abdul Rahman took the salute from a special dais as the contingents marched past.

The 3.5KM procession passed through Kota Baharu's main streets.

In KUALA TERENGGANU, the Sultan of Terengganu, Mizan Zainal Abidin and Permaisuri Nur Zahirah attended the National Day celebrations at Pantai Batu Buruk.

On arrival they were received by Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang.

The 3KM National Day procession began at Stadium Sultan Ismail Nasiruddin Shah and ended at Pantai Batu Buruk.

There was also a procession of police, military and Fire Brigade vehicles as well as cars and scooters from the Terengganu Volkswagen Club, Terengganu Mini Cars Club, Terengganu Motor Club and Terengganu Vespa Club.

Earlier at the Stadium Sultan Ismail Nasiruddin Shah, Abdul Hadi shouted 'Merdeka' thrice.

-- BERNAMA

TAJ SN AZH SHI BD AAM