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Show of unity by 35,000 Malaysians

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - The Mega Perpaduan 2002 celebration was launched amid colourful splendour by Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Syed Putra Jamalullail at Stadium Nasional in Bukit Jalil tonight.

It was the first ever event organised by the National Unity and Social Development Ministry.

Nearly 35,000 Malaysians took part in the event aimed at fostering unity and togetherness among people of various races and religions.

Present were Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Fauziah Tengku Abdul Rashid, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and wife Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and wife Datin Seri Endon Mahmood, and National Unity and Social Development Minister Datuk Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman.

The event, themed "Satu", or One, started at 8.30pm with the arrival of the King and Queen.

Siti Zaharah said the Ministry would be organising activities aimed at fostering closer rapport among the people.

"Our aim is to instil in Malaysians the spirit of patriotism so that they will protect and love their country," she added.

The song Satu was delivered by children of various races.

The lyrics called for everyone to "close their eyes and ears" and to "open their hearts and minds".

The crowd was entertained to, among others, a poetry recitation and a comedy sketch, and performances by artistes who included Noraniza Idris, Erra Fazira, Maya Karin, KRU and Senario.

A group of children also presented an entertaining sketch extolling the virtues of unity and togetherness.

Spectators were also treated to a traditional Indian peacock dance, Chinese lion dance as well as Malay dance.

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