

30 AUG 2003

Merdeka-Celebrations

DR M LEADS MERDEKA DAY BASH AT DATARAN MERDEKA

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 30 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad tonight joined more than 100,000 Malaysians from all walks of life to the countdown to midnight to usher in the 46th Merdeka Day celebrations.

Dr Mahathir's wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and his wife Datin Seri Endon Mahmood and several ministers attended the Ambang Merdeka celebrations.

Exciting programmes were held since evening to entertain the public.

The drizzle did not dampen the spirit of the crowd to wait till 12 midnight and enjoy the entertainment provided by local artistes.

The crowd was also entertained by a harmonica concert by 460 members in appreciation of Dr Mahathir's contributions to the country.

Their performance earned a mention in the Malaysia Book of Records as the most Number of Harmonica players performing at any one time.

Dr Mahathir, Abdullah and their wives were introduced to record setters, including conqueror of the English Channel Datuk Abdul Malik Maidin and the famous shoe designer Datuk Jimmy Choo.

Dr Mahathir then joined the crowd in the countdown to midnight -- about five seconds before the stroke of 12 midnight and shouted seven times Merdeka! Merdeka! when the clock struck 12.

The crowd then sang the new version of "Negaraku" for the first time, followed by the "Jalur Gemilang" and "Keragaman Malaysia" songs.

A colourful display of fireworks also added pomp and splendour to the celebrations.

-- BERNAMA

HM JM TS