

31 AUG 2003

Mahathir-Celebration

DR MAHATHIR PLEASED WITH THIS YEAR'S NATIONAL DAY CELEBRATIONS

PUTRAJAYA, Aug 31 (bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is pleased with the 46th National Day celebrations today which he described as the greatest ever.

He was also full of praise for the shows that were staged, including the airshow, and the united spirit displayed by all those present, especially the young.

"I'm pleased because this year it is extraordinary, for so many people turned up to witness the biggest celebrations ever," he told reporters after the National Day parade at Dataran Putrajaya, here.

Nearly 23,000 people took part in the parade filled with lively and colourful presentations including a vibrant performance by members of the Malaysian Citizens Symphony Group.

This year's parade is the last that Dr Mahathir will be attending as prime minister following his decision to retire in October.

Other ministers were just as pleased with the parade. Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yasin said it was a show of thanks and support by the people to the country's leadership while Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein said it was historic and full of joy.

"But in the midst of our joy and pride there is also sadness because this is the last time Dr Mahathir will be with us (as prime minister) for the national day celebrations," Hishammuddin said.

Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk M.Kayveas shared his sentiments.

Science, Technology and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Law Hieng Ding said the participation by the mammoth crowd showed the people's deep love for the nation and the prime minister while second Finance Minister Datuk Dr Jamaludin Jarjis said the parade was of global standard and would be a sweet memory for Dr Mahathir.

Meanwhile, Putrajaya Corporation chairman Tan Sri Azizan Zainul Abidin expressed happiness over the good turnout by the public.

Putrajaya was willing to host next year's Merdeka parade if the government so wanted, he said.

London-based shoe designer to celebrities Datuk Jimmy Choo said the future of Malaysia was bright under the leadership of Dr Mahathir.

Seychelles High Commissioner Sylvestre Radegonde said the selection of Putrajaya as the venue for this year's parade was a good one as it showcased the city which was the brainchild of Dr Mahathir.

Mohamed Nordin Yusoff, 56, from Klang, said he brought along his four children so that they could learn to appreciate the nation's Independence from a young age.

Trader Mawarni Sahar, 23, said she and her family members left their Ulu Selangor home at 5.30am to make it in time for the parade.

"I can't begin to describe my feelings of how proud I am to be a Malaysian after watching the awesome procession," she said.

-- BERNAMA

RIZ SHI MAM JK