

23 FEB 2003

NAM-Peace

MORE THAN 200,000 PEOPLE ATTEND PEACE RALLY

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 23 (Bernama) -- More than 200,000 peace-loving Malaysians participated in the biggest-ever anti-war rally in the country at the National Stadium in Bukit Jalil, here, tonight,

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad joined the people from all walks of life at the peaceful rally organised by the People's Alliance For Peace Malaysia (Peace Malaysia) aimed at pursuing a comprehensive, permanent and just world peace.

Dr Mahathir received more than 2.5 million signatures that were collected during the one-month One Million Signature campaign from 4B Youth President Datuk Wira Ali Rustam at the ceremony.

Patron of Peace Malaysia Datuk Hishammuddin Tun Hussein handed over a two-page seven-point memorandum from The Citizens of Malaysia to The People of the World to Dr Mahathir who will present it to the leaders attending the 13th Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) Summit here tomorrow.

Peace-loving Malaysians of all races, ages, religions and professions assembled at the stadium hours before the event began to show their support for peace and against war.

Rain did not dampen their spirit as they filled the stadium which can accommodate 100,000 people. Some spilt into the field and track while others followed the event on giant screens located outside the stadium.

The event was telecast live over Radio and Television Malaysia.

Some of the participants toted banners with slogans like "Love Peace Not War", their high spirit reflecting their concern about the threat of a US-led war against Iraq and Israel's aggression against the Palestinians.

The peace group that initiated the signature campaign and rally is a coalition of more than 100 non-governmental organisations comprising voluntary, youth, uniformed, political, religious and welfare bodies, students, professionals and government and opposition parties.

The main objectives of the group are to mobilise Malaysians from all walks of life through non-governmental channels towards resolving the issue of global peace.

They also aim to highlight weaknesses such as unfairness, double standards, ignorance as well as wrongdoings in war crimes and the use of weapons of mass destruction in the policies and actions of the western powers.

Present were the prime minister's wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali and Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

The event began with prayers by all religions followed by speeches by Hishammuddin and Dr Mahathir.

Twenty-six local artistes including Siti Nurhaliza, Ning Baizura, Erra Fazira and Yusri entertained the crowd.

-- BERNAMA

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