

01 JAN 2004

New Year-Celebration

TENS OF THOUSANDS THROG STREETS TO USHER 2004

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 1 (Bernama) -- Tens of thousands of Malaysians took

to the streets in the federal capital today to usher the New Year.

Several streets where the celebrations were held were closed for revellers to party while concerts involving popular Malaysian artistes were

on full-swing until midnight.

Several locations in the city held their own countdowns to usher 2004,

with Dataran Merdeka taking centre stage with about 100,000 people converging the historic site to welcome the New Year.

Newly appointed Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi too had

a busy night, making his maiden appearance as Prime Minister at a New Year

celebration, to be with the rakyat to usher in 2004.

Abdullah, who took over the helm from Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Oct

31, attended a New Year concert at the Kuala Lumpur City Centre (KLCC),

which houses the Petronas Twin Towers, the world's second highest structure.

After spending fifty minutes there, the Prime Minister proceeded to

Dataran Merdeka where he stayed until the countdown to 2004.

The public, not missing the opportunity, were seen jostling to shake

hands with the new Prime Minister with many queuing for hours just to get a

close look at him.

Fireworks lit the city skyline after the stroke of midnight, with

traffic coming to a standstill at many roads leading to and from the city

as many motorists parked their vehicles on roads to watch the colourful

display of fireworks.

At the KLCC, a celebration themed "Countdown@KLCC 2004" was organised

with an outdoor concert featuring popular Malaysian artistes, dance troupes

and comedy sketches.

The concert, which began about 8.45pm, featured famous local artistes

like M. Nasir, Ella, Noraniza Idris and Senario. There was also a live

cross over, on the giant screen placed at the concert venue, of Malaysian pop princess Siti Nurhaliza who was performing in Pulau Pangkor.

The highlight of the celebration at KLCC was a spectacular six-phase, seven-minute fireworks display featuring the latest pyrotechnic effects, against the backdrop of the Petronas Twin Towers, which was specially lit for the occasion.

At Dataran Merdeka, it was more traditional songs and dances with dancers of the Culture, Arts and Tourism Ministry taking the stage. There were also various cultural dances reflecting the various races living in the country.

The "Fiesta Harmony 2004" was organised by City Hall (DBKL) and the Kuala Lumpur Tourism Action Council and sponsored by Ambank Group. Among the artistes performing at the concert were Tan Sri S.M. Salim, KRU and Zainal Abidin.

As the clock struck midnight, and with the Prime Minister joining in the countdown, the crowd went wild, with the celebrations here ending about 12.30am.

Meanwhile the New Year celebration at Bukit Bintang, the city's golden triangle, got to a roaring start with a street fest which began about 6.30pm.

Held at Fiesta street, Sungai Wang Plaza, the celebration here included cultural performances by the Kuala Lumpur City Hall cultural dance troupe, the Lee Wei Song School of Music and dragon dance show by Tarian Naga Na Tok Kong.

Chinese artistes who performed here included Kit Chan, Seven (a band), Nicholas Teo, Johnson Low, Tan Yi Yi and the Mumsters.

At the Mines Resort City, located 10km south of Kuala Lumpur, a similar celebration was held offering a new unique musical drama called "Journey to the West".

There was also a prize presentation for the Patriotic Song Singing Competition and the Battle of the Bands organised by "Persatuan

Syarikat  
Rakaman Bumiputra Malaysia."

The sky over the resort city was also lighted by fireworks at  
the  
stroke of midnight.

Similar celebrations were also held at Berjaya Times Square,  
Bangsar,  
Sri Hartamas, Mont Kiara, Sunway Resort and Stadium Merdeka.

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