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Honouring sacrifices of soldiers

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - The nation today celebrated Warriors' Day to honour the contributions and sacrifices of soldiers who died while carrying out their duties.

In the Federal capital, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad laid a wreath at the National Monument followed by Defence Forces chief Jen Tan Sri Mohd Zahidi Zainuddin and Deputy Inspector-General of Police Datuk Seri Mohd Bakri Omar.

Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, ministers and foreign diplomats also attended.

Former army chiefs and servicemen who served during the Japanese Occupation in the early 1940s also paid their respects.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir inspected a guard-of-honour mounted by members of the Royal Malay Regiment.

Patriotic songs were aired and a poem entitled Pahlawan (Warrior) was also recited.

In Penang, the day was commemorated with Universiti Sains Malaysia becoming the first university in the country to plant seven wooden peace poles on its main campus in Minden.

The 2.5m-long four-sided peace poles, made of cengal emas wood, were handcrafted with a message "May Peace Prevail On Earth" in Bahasa Malaysia and six other languages - English, Russian, French, Arabic, Spanish and Chinese.

Vice-chancellor Professor Datuk Dzulkifli Abdul Razak said to commemorate the occasion, they agreed to change the name of a campus road, Jalan Universiti, to Jalan Patriotisme.

Also present was USM deputy vice-chancellor (student affairs) Associate Prof Datuk Jamaludin Mohaidin.

In Ipoh, Sultan of Perak Sultan Azlan Shah launched the event at the Perak administrative building. Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Tajol Rosli Ghazali was also present.

Fifteen contingents of 30 members stood solemnly at attention as the last post was sounded to remember those fallen in the course of duty.

Mej Uzir Abdullah from the Second Royal Ranger Regiment led the parade of the various contingents, which comprised the army, police, firemen, cadets and other uniformed bodies. A representative of the police read a poem as a tribute to the men and women who died serving the country.

In Shah Alam, Sultan of Selangor Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah inspected a guard-of-honour and later laid the wreath at the Selangor memorial monument.

He was accompanied by Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Khir Toyo.

In Malacca, Chief Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam said the State had allocated RM50,000 for the exservicemen fund.

The State Government was committed to ensuring former armed forces and police personnel were well taken care of, he said.

In Kuala Terengganu, the 18th Regiment of the Royal Malay Army battalion held a tahlil (special prayers) to commemorate the occasion.

Its commanding Officer, Lt-Kol Rosli Abdul Rahman, said 300 officers and the rank and file attended the prayers at Al-Ansar mosque in Seri Pantai camp, Seberang Takir.

In Kota Baru, more than 200 people attended the event at Padang Merdeka. Present were Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat, executive

councillors, police chief Datuk Mohd Najib Abdul Aziz and Eighth Brigade commander Brig Jen Zulkifeli Mohd Zain.

Nik Aziz recited the doa and later laid the wreath at the warrior's monument.

In Kota Kinabalu, Yang di-Pertua Negeri Tun Ahmadshah Abdullah led the laying of wreaths at the State Monument at the Tropical Rainforest Park.

Others who laid wreaths were Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Tham Nyip Shen, who represented Chief Minister Datuk Musa Aman, and Fifth Infantry Brigade Commander Brig-Jen Datuk Yasin Yahya.