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## Muslims celebrate Maulidur Rasul

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - Muslims nationwide today crowded mosques, stadiums, and community halls to commemorate the birth of Prophet Muhammad or Maulidur Rasul.

The celebrations were marked with processions, Quran recitals, nasyid and speeches enjoining Muslims to better themselves by acquiring knowledge, to forge unity amongst themselves and non-Muslims and to embody the character and practice the values of the Prophet.

The celebrations also saw Maulidur Rasul awards being presented to individuals in recognition of their contribution to society.

In Kuala Lumpur, some 15,000 Muslims joined Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin at the national-level Maulidur Rasul celebrations at Putra Stadium, Bukit Jalil.

The celebrations kicked off with a colourful procession which included participants from government organisations, ministries, private sector, non-governmental organisations, universities and Klang Valley schools.

Present were Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Fauziah, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, his deputy Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, and Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Abdul Hamid Zainal Abidin.

The audience was treated to a Quranic recital by last year's primary school-level Tilawah Al-Quran champion Fahrur Raqib Abd Majid, nasyid performances by Karisma and Al-Hidayah, and poetry recitals by performers and singers from the Islamic Development Department.

The King bestowed Maulidur Rasul awards to nine Muslims and non-Muslims.

In Kota Kinabalu, Yang di-Pertua Negeri Tun Ahmadshah Abdullah led 5,000 Muslims on a 2km procession from Padang Merdeka to Wisma Muis.

The celebration culminated with the presentation of the Maulidur Rasul award to Man Daud Osman, 81, of Tenom and Hasnah Mohd Yaakub, 40, of Keningau by Ahmadshah.

In Johor Baru, the Sultan of Johor, in his speech read by Tunku Mahkota of Johor Tunku Ibrahim Iskandar, to those gathered at Sultan Abu Bakar Mosque, urged Muslims to abide by the teachings of Islam and improve their knowledge in other fields.

Present were Tunku Ibrahim's consort Raja Zarith Sofiah Sultan Idris Shah, Tunku Bendahara Johor Tunku Majid Iskandar, Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman and his wife Datin Prof Dr Jamilah Ariffin, Johor Mufti Datuk Nooh Gadut and State Secretary Datuk Ayob Mion.

In Seremban, the State-level celebrations began with a Quran recital and speeches by Yang di-Pertuan Besar Negeri Sembilan Tuanku Ja'afar Tuanku Abdul Rahman and Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohd Isa Abdul Samad before the selawat, or praising of the Prophet.

Tuanku Ja'afar urged the people to unite and practise the values of the Prophet, while Isa advised Muslims to be rational and not to act against the law.

Tuanku Ja'afar later joined the people in a 2km procession to mark the celebration.

In Penang, Yang di-Pertua Negeri Tun Abdul Rahman Abbas told a 2,000-member audience at SM Teknik Seberang Prai, Bukit Minyak, to practise a disciplined and honest lifestyle in order to develop into better Muslims.

He later bestowed awards to eight recipients including the Tokoh Maulidur Rasul award to al-Huda mosque imam, Md Tahir Ayob. Others who

received awards were Abdullah Che Teh (Anugerah Guru Agama Cemerlang Sekolah Rendah), Hussein Ahmad (Anugerah Guru Agama Cemerlang Sekolah Menengah), Mohd Nizar Abdul Mutalib (Anugerah Pelajar Cemerlang) and Malek Abdullah (Anugerah Saudara Baru).

The remaining recipients were Ramli Mokhtar (Anugerah Penolong Imam Terbaik), Ramli Hassan (Anugerah Pegawai Masjid Cemerlang) and Ismail Rahim (Anugerah Bilal Cemerlang).

In Kuantan, the Sultan of Pahang called on the country's Muslims to make mosques a centre to unite Muslims as had been done by Prophet Muhammad who turned mosques into a centre for Muslims to carry out their activities.

About 2,000 people attended the celebration which also included nasyid performance, video show and religious talks by renowned speakers.

In Kuala Terengganu, about 2,000 Muslims attended the celebration at the State Stadium today, launched by State Education, Dakwah and Syariah Implementation Committee chairman Datuk Harun Taib.

The event began with Quran recital by a student of Maahad Tahfiz in Kampung Padang Midin, Abdul Halim Zakaria.

The audience was entertained by nasyid group Jailul Quran, also from the Maahad Tahfiz.