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United in prayer for the nation

Malaysians ask for continued peace

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KUALA LUMPUR: Thousands of Malaysians of all faiths prayed in unison last night for peace and prosperity for the nation for the next 50 years. They also thanked God for all the blessings that Malaysians have enjoyed in the past 50 years.

The Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Mizan Zainal Abidin, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak and Culture, Arts and Heritage Minister Datuk Seri Rais Yatim led thousands of Muslims at the *Majlis Tahlil Merdeka* at the National Mosque here.

Simultaneously, Christians, Buddhists, Taoists, Hindus and Sikhs prayed at their respective places of worship.

MCA president Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting said the country's founding fathers had worked together to achieve independence through the Alliance government 50 years ago.

He said Malaysians from different races and backgrounds had worked together to ensure the country's stability and development.

"Let us pray together in this memorable occasion that we will continue to stay united and join hands to work for a better future," he said.

Ong added that he was glad that Malaysians of different religions had taken their own initiative to pray for the country on this important and special occasion.

MCA vice-president Datuk Seri Dr Fong Chan Onn, who was at a special gathering by the Buddhist community to commemorate Merdeka Day at the Malaysian Buddhist Association Kuala Lumpur and Selangor branch in Jalan Klang Lama here last night, called on Malaysian Buddhists to actively participate in nation-building and share in the country's joy as the nation celebrates its 50th anniversary of Independence.

Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Tan Sri Bernard Dompok, who was at the Ecumenical Service of Thanksgiving for the Nation: 50th Anniversary of Merdeka at St. Paul's Anglican Church in Petaling Jaya, said: "A lot of things have been done to put this country together and Malaysians are able to



Malaysiaku Gemilang

share things as well as to give and take."

He said parishioners who attended the service had gathered to pray so that the nation's leadership would see the truth of their hearts and see what they wanted.

"Be assured that people in the Cabinet do think about all people in Malaysia. I do not think that members of the Cabinet have forgotten about the minorities and those who live in the rural areas," he said.

Artiste Juwita Suwita performed the song *Satu Suara* before the end of the service, which was attended by about 100 parishioners.

MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu, who attended a special prayer service at the Sri Subramaniam Temple in Batu Caves, said the sacrifices and contributions of Indian leaders in gaining independence for the country should be published in various languages, including Bahasa Malaysia.

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These efforts would provide an opportunity for the people, especially the younger generation of various races, to understand the contributions of these leaders, he said.

The Sikh community held a special prayer for peace, attended by about 250 people, at the Gurdwara Sahib Sentul here.

Malaysian Gurdwaras Council president Jagir Singh said he hoped the country would continue to enjoy peace and prosperity.

"We hope the rights of all Malaysians will be protected, and that the country will continue to be an example for other nations," he added.

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DATUK SERI ONG KA TING