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'Sehati Sejiwa' is in the air

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UNITY IN DIVERSITY:

Thousands throng Dataran Merdeka to watch 59th National Day parade

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THOUSANDS thronged Dataran Merdeka here yesterday morning, illustrating what *Sehati Sejiwa* (One Heart, One Soul) truly means.

The theme, which was selected for the second consecutive year, describes the unity of the people in a diverse nation.

The early morning rain did not dampen the spirits of the estimated 50,000-strong crowd as they witnessed the National Day parade.

The celebrations began with Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah taking the royal salute, followed by the singing of the national anthem *Negaraku*, which was accompanied by a 14-gun salute, symbolising Malaysia's 13 states and the Federal Territories, and recital of the Rukun Negara.

Present were Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Hajah Haminah, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak, his wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, ministers and government officials.

A total of 14,491 people made up of members of uniformed bodies, civil servants, corporate staff and students from 26 contingents took part in the parade and performances. There was a special performance by the police contingent and 248 military assets were paraded.

Looking sleek and smart, 50 horses and 22 dogs from the army and



Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah, Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Hajah Haminah, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak and Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi waving the Jalur Gemilang during the 59th National Day celebrations at Dataran Merdeka in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.
AFP pic

police had a field day as they basked in the admiration of the crowd.

Athletes representing Malaysia in the recently concluded Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, were paraded on a double-decker bus. Some spectators waved their hands, while others took pictures of national shuttler Datuk Lee Chong Wei, diver Pandelega Rinong and cyclist Azizulhasni Awang and their fellow athletes.

Najib tweeted a picture of the athletes beaming as they were paraded.

"The warm welcome of the #Rio2016 heroes with rapturous cheers and applause shows the genuine appreciation of the Malaysian people," he tweeted.

Tam Ho Yan, 20, from Puchong, Selangor, who watched the parade for the first time, said the athletes' appearance made the National Day celebration this year extra special.

"This is my first time watching the parade and I was so excited to see Chong Wei and other athletes who

were in the Olympics.

"I will cherish my experience here for a long time," said Tam, who was with members of the Scouts Association of Malaysia, led by its chief executive officer and secretary-general Datuk Raja Ruslan Raja Samah.

The celebration ended with cultural dance performances representing the various ethnic groups in Malaysia and the public singing patriotic songs, including the theme song *Sehati Sejiwa*.

Page 1 pic: Athletes who represented Malaysia at the Rio Olympics receiving a warm welcome from spectators at the National Day celebrations at Dataran Merdeka in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. Pic by Ghazali Kori

Back page pic: Marchers carrying a Jalur Gemilang at Dataran Merdeka in Kuala Lumpur. Pic by Mohd Khairul Helmy Mohd Din