

Brazil's Lula gets serenaded on his 80th birthday

PETALING JAYA: Brazilian President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva received a warm surprise at the 47th Asean Summit and Related Summits gala dinner when leaders broke into song to celebrate his 80th birthday.

The atmosphere turned festive as Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim took Lula by the arm and led him to the stage on Monday night, prompting applause and a cheerful rendition of the birthday song from guests.

Clad in a purple batik shirt, Lula was joined by his wife, Rosangela da Silva, as he cut a specially decorated cake - marking a memorable milestone during his first official visit to Malaysia as President.

Earlier in the day, Lula shared with the media his joy over reach-

ing a birthday milestone.

"I just turned 80 today, and I feel really great. I hope to live until 120.1 am a bit sad because I did not see anyone bringing me presents," he quipped at a press conference.

Several Malaysian Cabinet ministers were among those congratulating the Brazilian leader during the gala dinner.

They include Plantation and Commodities Minister Datuk Seri Johari Abdul Ghani, Transport Minister Anthony Loke, Communications Minister Datuk Fahmi Fadzil, Health Minister Datuk Seri Dr Dzulkefly Ahmad and Housing and Local Government Minister Nga Kor Ming.

The event also featured performances by Malaysian music

icons Datuk Seri Siti Nurhaliza, Datuk M.' Nasir and Dayang Nurfaizah, which added to the lively atmosphere.

Lula later took to social media platform X to thank his Asean counterparts for the surprise tribute.

"I wrap up today among new friends and old companions whom I met here in Malaysia.

"Heads of state from South-East Asia and invited countries paid a beautiful tribute for my birthday. To all of them, my deepest gratitude," he wrote.



Joyous evening: Anwar singing to Lula (centre) during the 47th Asean Summit and Related Summits gala dinner in Kuala Lumpur. — Bernama