

Istana Negara Closes With Pomp And Pageantry
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KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 15 (Bernama) -- After serving for 54 years, Istana Negara at Jalan Istana here, which is the official residence of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, today ended its function officially with pomp and pageantry.

The ceremony beginning at 9am, witnessed the marching in of the First Battalion of the Royal Malay Regiment (RAMD) comprising two officers and 58 men of various ranks accompanied by the RAMD central band.

The ceremony continued with a team of flag bearers comprising 10 members of the RAMD who lowered the Yang di-Pertuan Agong's private flag as the last post was being played to signify the shifting of Istana Negara at Jalan Istana to the Istana Negara in Jalan Duta.

Later, the ceremony continued with the procession of the flag bearers with the ceremonial horse squadron to the palace main entrance to present the flag to Istana Negara Grand Chamberlain Datuk Tengku Farok Husin Tengku Abdul Jalil who represented Istana Negara in signifying the palace's completion of duty.

The flag was presented by Acting RAMD First Battalion Officer in Command Major Mohd Kadri Abu Bakar.

As a symbolic closure of the monumental building with its golden dome, the Grand Chamberlain later directed Istana Negara officer Rosli Asri to lock the main entrance of the palace signifying all duties at Istana Negara had completed before moving to the Istana Negara at Jalan Duta for another flag raising ceremony.

The teams in attendance comprised RAMD First Battalion and the Ceremonial Horse Squadron with three officers and 69 men of various ranks with 12 horses.

Among those present to witness the flag lowering ceremony were Senior Deputy Secretary General of the Prime Minister's Department who is also the chairman of National Official Ceremony, Datuk Othman Mahmood; Armed Forces (ATM) Chief of Staff Lt Gen Datuk Raja Afandi Raja Mohd Nor and ATM's Deputy Chief of Staff Maj Gen Datuk Abdul Aziz Ibrahim.

Meanwhile, at the Istana Negara in Jalan Duta, a ceremony to raise the Yang di-Pertuan Agong's private flag began at 10.25am when the Grand Chamberlain handed over the flag to a team of flag bearers to signify the commencement of duty of the Malaysian Armed Forces at the Jalan Duta Istana Negara square.

The new palace in tune with technology today uses an automated flag raiser unlike the manual approach at the old palace.

Istana Negara began shifting its operations to the new complex in Jalan Duta in stages since Oct 19 while the assignment of guards from ATM began today.

The 11.34 hectare old palace which was the official residence of the Yang di-Pertuan Agong was originally a double storey bungalow built in 1928 by a local Chinese millionaire, Chan

Wing.

The bungalow was bought by the Selangor State Government and renovated to become the residence of Sultan Selangor, Sultan Sir Hishamuddin Alam Shah.

The building which was made a palace of Sultan Selangor was later acquired by the Federal Government as the official residence of the first Yang Di-Pertuan Agong, Tuanku Abdul Rahman Tuanku Muhammad, a few weeks before the declaration of independence.

Meanwhile, the new Istana Negara built with Islamic and traditional Malay features is located on a 96.52 hectare site compared to 11.34 hectare at the old palace.

It will witness the installation of the 14th Yang di-Pertuan Agong, Sultan Abdul Halim Muadzam Shah of Kedah in December.

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