

**Najib, Rosmah Join Gathering Of 1 Million Women
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PUTRAJAYA, March 17 (Bernama) -- The achievements and aspirations of Malaysian women took centre stage Sunday as Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak and wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor joined them for the '1 Million Women Purple Walk' here in conjunction with this year's International Women's Day celebration.

The programme, held simultaneously in several locations nationwide, is an initiative to symbolise the solidarity of Malaysian women and celebrate their success in various fields.

Besides promoting a healthy lifestyle, the programme is also to show support and appreciation to efforts made by the government to dignify and empower women in the country.

Najib and Rosmah, both clad in purple T-shirt, in line with the colour theme of the celebration, drew applause from the crowd when they, accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin and wife, Puan Sri Noorainee Abdul Rahman, Chief Secretary to the Government Datuk Seri Dr Ali Hamsa and other VIPs walked from the office building of the Domestic Trade, Cooperatives and Consumerism Ministry to the Putrajaya Square, the venue of the celebration.

Another group of Cabinet members, who included Information, Communications and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim, Defence Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and Tourism Minister walked into the square from the Youth and Sports Ministry's office block.

After they had taken their seats, the national anthem was played and a call was made for those present to observe a minute of silence, with the Muslims citing the Al-Fatihah, for the fallen heroes in the intrusion by Sulu terrorists in Sabah.

At the function, Najib also launched the 1Malaysia Perwani Community that would create a 100,000 strong women's assembly as a national community transformation agent.

Before leaving, the prime minister and wife also visited the booths at the Women's Carnival held nearby.

In KUALA TERENGGANU, participants walked for about two kilometres from the Batu Buruk Square to the venue of the event at the Shahbandar Square.

Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Ahmad Said, in his speech, said the encouraging response from women showed that they supported the transformation carried out by the government.

In KANGAR, more than 2,000 women participated in the programme, involving a three-kilometre walk which began and ended at the Datuk Sheikh Ahmad Square.

It was launched by Perlis Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Md Isa Sabu, who also launched the setting up of a fund for security members killed in Sabah.

In KUCHING, about 57,000 people participated in the 1 Million Women Assembly, held simultaneously in 11 divisions in Sarawak.

It was launched by Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud at the Kuching Integrated

Recreation Centre, Le'Park.

Abdul Taib and wife, Puan Sri Ragad Kurdi Taib, also joined participants in the 2.4km walk.

In his speech, Abdul Taib said women played an important role in the country's development, including during the time pre-independence era.

In SHAH ALAM, Selangor Barisan Nasional (BN) deputy chairman Datuk Seri Noh Omar flagged-off 2,000 participants in the one-kilometre walk to around Taman Tasik Shah Alam.

In KELANTAN, about 60,000 people participated in the programme which was opened by International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Mustapa Mohamed.

Besides listening to the prime minister's speech at the national-level programme, which was aired-live, the participants also sang patriotic song, including "Barisan Kita", as a show of support to members of the security forces fighting against the Sulu terrorists in Sabah.

In MELAKA, Chief Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam, in addressing the crowd of about 10,000 participants at Dataran Pahlawan, said the programme was a manifestation of the women's role which was becoming more important and appreciated by the government.

"It is hoped that women will continue to play their role in developing the society and also be given important posts at federal and state levels," he added.

In SABAH, more than 15,000 women gathered at Dataran Bandaraya Kota Kinabalu for the 1 Million Women Assembly.

Chief Minister Datuk Seri Musa Aman, in his speech, said the programme also promoted healthy lifestyle among the society.

In PENANG, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Tan Sri Nor Mohamed Yakcop, in his speech at the launch of the state-level programme in Permatang Pauh, hoped that it would bring about more health and recreational programmes for women.

The programme, he said, provided the best platform to foster harmony and strengthen ties among women.

The programme in Penang involved the participation of about 30,000 women.

Meanwhile in IPOH, the programme was opened by Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abdul Kadir at the Sultan Abdul Aziz Shah Polo Field.

A large crowd had gathered as early as 8am at three locations to begin the walk, namely at Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Tunku Abdul Rahman, Sekolah Menengah Agama Izzuddin Shah and Sekolah Menengah Vokasional Persiaran Brash.

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