

**Malaysians Proudly Display Patriotic Spirit, Solidarity In Celebrating National Day
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KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 31 (Bernama) -- Malaysians from all walks of life descended in droves to Dataran Merdeka here today to proudly display their patriotic spirit and solidarity in celebrating National Day 2015.

The sea of Malaysians had the opportunity to witness almost 13,000 participants from the public and private sector, security forces, school students and a group of mountain guides take part in a mesmerising parade at the venue in conjunction with the National Day 2015 celebrations themed "#sehatisejiwa" (One Heart, One Soul).

Gracing the historic event were the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah and Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Hajah Haminah.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Abdul Razak and wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and wife Datin Seri Hamidah Khamis, Cabinet ministers and foreign envoys were also present to witness the auspicious event.

Shortly after arrival, Tuanku Abdul Halim took the salute and inspected a guard-of-honour mounted by four officers and 103 men from the 1st Battalion of the Royal Malay Regiment from the Sungai Besi Camp led by Major Mohd Herdi Ismail.

This was followed by the hoisting of the Jalur Gemilang (national flag) by Royal Malaysian Navy personnel, accompanied by the singing of the national anthem Negaraku.

Immediately after, a 14-gun salute was fired by the 41st Battery of the Royal Artillery Regiment.

The celebration which was broadcast live nationwide, started with a special performance, 'Derap Seragam', by 900 officers and men from the Malaysian Armed Forces (ATM).

The performance was a first for the ATM at a national day parade; it was followed by a musical interlude mounted by school students.

An LED screen measuring 108 metres by nine metres, the biggest ever used in any celebration in the country, was also installed at Dataran Merdeka to enable the thousands of people seated at the tribune (terraced seats) and along the road to get a clearer view of the action.

Following that was the pledge of allegiance, led by Noradzmi Baba from the Kuala Lumpur FT Education Department who has performed the task since 1987. And for the first time, he was accompanied by five Gen Y icons who have achieved success in their field of endeavour.

The five were differently-abled Muhammad Zahriff Affandi, a recipient of the National Youth Icon Award; radio and television personality Fara Fauzana, national wushu queen Diana Bong Siong Lin, mountain guide Mohd Rizuan Kauhinin and teacher Louis Marie Neubert Ambrose.

To further fire up the spirit of patriotism, the emcees, Saiful Khairi Ahmad, Rudiyan Shah and Atikah Mahali also recited patriotic poems, among others "Di Tanah Malaysia" by Razali Mohd Yussof and "Lentera Zaman" by Mahaya Mohd Yassin.

The march past proper was led by a contingent consisting of trainees from Institut Kemahiran Belia Negara carrying the Jalur Gemilang and the flags of the states followed by the "Explorasi Sehati Sejiwa" contingent.

The latter contingent made up of representatives from the Communications and Multimedia Ministry, government departments and agencies, non-governmental organisations and the corporate sector is on a roadshow around the country to promote the "Sehati Sejiwa" theme and will conclude the expedition on Malaysia Day (Sept 16).

The participation of the mountain guides this time around was of particular interest as they had played an instrumental role in rescue missions on Mount Kinabalu in the aftermath of a devastating earthquake that struck in the area on June 5.

As for the children present, they were a picture of excitement in seeing various mascots from local animation houses, notably Upin and Ipin and BoboiBoy who were part of the animation contingent, which was followed by other contingents.

Assets showcased by the Royal Malaysia Police like the Kawasaki GTR 1400 and Honda ST 1300 motorcycles used by the traffic police to control traffic, escort VIPs and for patrols were also a hit with the crowd.

The ATM also showed their latest Army, Air Force and Navy assets, including the G. Wagon armaments carrier used by the infantry, besides armoured personnel carriers and howitzers.

Up above, the spectators were feasted to a formation flight by nine Pilatus PC 7 aircraft which are used for pilots' basic training by the Royal Malaysian Air Force, its latest A 400 M transport plane and a fly past by 11 Sukhoi SU 30 MKM fighter jets.

Ending the celebration at Dataran Merdeka was a special performance, "Rakyat Bersepadu", to reflect the harmony among the various races in the country. This was captured via traditional dances by more than 1,000 participants.

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