

The nation celebrates Merdeka

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KUALA LUMPUR: Merdeka cheer resounded around the country as Malaysians celebrated 49 years of independence with parades showcasing the success of nation-building.

Thousands congregated at state capitals early in the morning to raise the Jalur Gemilang and sing *NegaraKu*.

The only exception was Alor Star where rain forced the postponement of celebrations to Sept 13.

In **Kuantan**, about 10,000 people comprising civil servants, private sector employees and uniformed bodies personnel made up 77 contingents that took part in the parade at Dataran Kuantan.

The Tengku Mahkota of Pahang Tengku Abdullah Sultan Ahmad Shah and Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob took the salute from the main podium.

In **Kuala Terengganu**, Sultan Mizan Zainal Abidin, Sultanah Nur Zahirah and Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh were among the 10,000 who attended the parade at Dataran Shah Bandar.

A total of 146 contingents comprising uniformed bodies, government departments and educational institutions walked 3km from the Sultan Ismail Nasiruddin Shah Stadium.

In **Ipoh**, the procession started at 9.30am with two members of Force

136 aka Harimau Malaya, Wan Nik Wan Ngah, 83, and Abu Bakar Taib, 84, in two pick-ups at the helm.

Among those who participated in the parade were brass bands from Sekolah Menengah Sam Tet, St Michael's Institution, and Anderson School, St John Ambulance, the Perak Chinese Chamber of Commerce and representatives of district councils.

In **George Town**, a group of 20 Umno veterans stole the show as they joined the 9,000-strong procession in wheelchairs.

A total of 113 contingents involving schools, uniformed bodies, state government agencies and private companies in the state participated in the two-hour parade.

There were also 13 vehicle contingents from uniformed bodies including the police, the Fire and Rescue Department and the Civil Defence Department.

Yang di-Pertua Negeri Tun Abdul Rahman Abbas and Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon were among VIPs present.

In **Alor Star**, Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mahdzir Khalid announced the postponement after a two-hour wait for the rain to stop.

In **Johor Baru**, the State-level celebrations were held in Muar where Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani

Othman took the salute at a parade.

On Wednesday night, Ghani and wife Prof Datin Jamilah Ariffin were among thousands who braved a downpour for the Merdeka Day countdown at the Tanjung Emas Square.

Ghani urged the people to understand and cherish Independence and work hard to strengthen unity and solidarity among Malaysians.

In **Malacca**, 128 contingents comprising 8,848 participants from schools, uniformed bodies, and government departments and associations took part in the parade.

Yang di-Pertua Negeri Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob, Chief Minister Mohd Ali Mohd Rustam and political leaders were present.

In **Kota Kinabalu**, nearly 5,000 people gathered at the Tun Fuad Stephens stretch along the waterfront under perfect weather to watch the annual parade and celebrate the national holiday.

Following the march were a convoy of vehicles ranging from cyclists, superbikes, vintage cars, army tanks, and police cars to garbage trucks.

Present were Yang di-Pertua Negeri Tun Ahmadshah Abdullah, and his consort Toh Puan Dayang Masuyah Awang Japar and Chief Minister Datuk Seri Musa Aman.