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N-Day fervour

Bird's eye view of Malaysians coming in droves to watch the National Day parade at Dataran Merdeka, Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

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Thai police chief **rewards** his men for bomb suspect arrest

BANGKOK: Thailand's police chief announced yesterday he was handing his own officers a reward of some US\$84,000 (RM350,000) for apprehending a man who has been charged in connection with last month's deadly Bangkok bomb blast.

Police General Somyot Poompanmoung held up three million baht in cash in tightly stacked notes

which he said would be distributed among his men following the arrest of a foreign man on Saturday.

"One million baht comes from me, the other two million baht came from my businessmen friends who do not want to be named," he told reporters at a press conference.

Somyot said the reward money was going to the police because the public had not helped in track-

ing down the man. "It is clear that it was the authorities alone," he said, adding they had not received tip-offs from the public.

Police and private citizens had previously offered rewards for information that led to the capture of anyone involved in the blast.

Saturday's arrest was the first major breakthrough in an investigation that appeared to have stalled

following the Aug 17 blast, Thailand's worst single mass-casualty attack.

Before his appointment as police chief after last year's coup, Somyot declared his assets at US\$11.5 million including income from advising companies as well as property holdings and investments.

A loyalist of junta leader Prayut Chan-O-Cha, he had vowed to transfer, arrest or prosecute all

graft-tainted officers.

True to his word, he has nailed several senior policemen, including the head of Thailand's elite Central Investigation Bureau – jailed with his deputy in January for defaming the royal family while running a criminal empire from inside the police. – AFP

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