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The King and Queen flanked by Najib and Rosmah with Ahmad Zahid (second from left).

Tourists share rakyat's cherished moments

KUALA LUMPUR: Despite the controversies surrounding the country, Malaysians from all walks of life made it to Dataran Merdeka to participate and witness the National Day celebration held with the usual pomp and splendour while it reflected on what the nation has achieved since its independence in 1957.

For Muhammad Hassan, 43, a small time businessman from Rawang, his disability did not hinder him from coming to the city as early as 6.30am to catch a glimpse of the parade that took place at the iconic square.

"For me and my friends, it's a moment to cherish. We are Malaysians and we must be proud of our nation and its achievements," he said, adding that this year's celebration, he felt, was far more entertaining and exciting than previous years.

His happiness was also seeing Malaysians of all races coming together to partake in the joyous occasion.

For Abdul Rahim Mohd Yusof, 69, a civil servant from Wangsa Maju here, the National Day celebration is the best platform for the rakyat to show their love for the country.

"Every year I come down, and my spirit is still as exhilarating as ever. For those who do not know about our independence, they should come and watch for themselves the spirit of Malaysia," he said.

For another civil servant, Prakash Sharma, 40, from Rawang, the National Day is seen as a family outing where he takes the opportunity to show his children what the country has achieved, and most importantly the significance of independence.

"It's a joyous occasion to commemorate and cherish. The children will always remember their annual trip to Dataran Merdeka with the parents besides developing a positive thinking about our nation and the developments over the years."

For couple, Dries Van Hee, 29, a physiotherapist from Belgium, and Eke Van Zwol, 23, a health science student from Netherlands, their visit to Malaysia was timely to participate in the National Day celebration and, better still, to watch the parade. "Malaysians are very friendly and kind. It's so nice seeing so many gather here for the celebration. We love the country and will be back," said both of them."

An Indian expatriate Vanni Rajan, 33, took the public holiday as an opportunity to come to Dataran Merdeka with her family of five to watch the parade. "There is so much of excitement, activities and the spirit of patriotism is seen in the faces of the citizens," she added.

> Malaysians from all walks of life come together to celebrate joyous occasion

KUALA LUMPUR: Themed *Sehati, Sejiwa* (One Heart, One Soul), this year's National Day celebration once again saw Malaysians from all walks of life flood Dataran Merdeka here to show their patriotism and loyalty to the country.

The Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah and Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Hajah Haminah graced the celebration which saw more than 13,000 participants from both the public and private sectors taking part in the colourful, vibrant parades including a team of mountain guides, school children and the security forces.

Also present were Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak and his wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and wife Datin Seri Hamidah Khamis, Cabinet ministers and foreign diplomats.

In keeping with tradition, Tuanku Abdul Halim took the salute and inspected the 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.

The crowd then witnessed the hoisting of



School children enjoying a light moment after performing at Dataran Square yesterday.

the national flag (Jalur Gemilang) by officers from The Royal Malaysian Navy followed by the singing of *Negaraku* and the 14-gun salute by the Royal Artillery Regiment.

After the gun salute, the crowd was treated to a host of performances which kicked off with the 'Derap Seragam', by 900 officers and personnel from the Malaysian

Armed Forces, followed by a musical interlude by school students. Trainees from Institut Kemahiran Belia Negara carrying the national flag and those of the various states later led the march past. They were followed by the "Explorasi Sehati Sejiwa" contingent.

People who were even seated a distance away were able to witness the celebrations

Colourful shows mark states' celebration

PETALING JAYA: While Dataran Merdeka in Kuala Lumpur took centre stage in this year's National Day celebrations, the other states held their own programmes to mark the auspicious day.

In BUKIT MERTAJAM, a pre-dawn downpour did not deter the more than 5,000 strong crowd from celebrating National Day at Bandar Perda here yesterday.

Penang Governor Tun Dr Abdul Rahman Abbas inspected the guard-of-honour mounted by Third Armour Corp of the Royal Malaysian Army.

The celebration kicked up a notch as dance groups from the three main races performed before culminating in a final multi-cultural dance number. This was followed by an acrobatic and athletic gymnastic performance from the Sokko Gakkai troupe, who wowed the crowd with their dexterity.

In IPOH, some 10,000 people took part in the state level National Day celebration here

yesterday.

The Sultan of Perak, Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah, and Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Zambry Abd Kadir were among the dignitaries who witnessed the parade in front of Dewan Bandaran.

Sultan Nazrin, who is the Colonel-in-Chief of the Royal Engineers Regiment, inspected a guard-of-honour mounted by three officers and 103 personnel from the Second Division of the Royal Army Engineers Regiment from Camp Sagro, Taiping.

Zambry in his speech said the unity among the various races had become the envy of many countries. "However we cannot deny the existence of certain quarters who are uncomfortable with the peace and harmony in the country."

In JOHOR BARU, a 50-member Yayasan Pelajaran Johor contingent beat 93 teams, including those from government agencies, to win the best parade marching team at the state-level National Day parade held at

Dataran Bandaraya here yesterday.

Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Mohamed Khaled Nordin officiated at the ceremony which was witnessed by thousands of people.

In SEREMBAN, 118 contingents with 11,000 participants from various government departments and agencies, uniformed staff, Barisan Nasional (BN) component parties, schools and non-governmental organisations put up the procession for the National Day state-level celebration at Jalan Yam Tuan, Bernama reported.

In SARAWAK, more than 3,000 participants from 65 contingents representing various government agencies and departments, as well as associations joined the celebration which began at 8am, with more than 5,000 people present to witness the parade. Governor Tun Abdul Taib Mahmud as well as state Cabinet ministers, heads of departments and community heads also attended the ceremony.

BERNAMAPIX

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