



The near-capacity crowd at the National Stadium in Bukit Jalil last night enjoyed song and dance performances and a fireworks display.

Jubilant display of unity

> Merdeka spirit, Games victory rev up crowd

KUALA LUMPUR: Winning the 29th SEA Games was a special gift to Malaysians celebrating the eve of Merdeka Day last night.

The double celebration was held in full patriotic spirits and unity throughout the country, irrespective of race, religion, background and political differences.

The mood at the Bukit Jalil National Stadium, where the Games were held since Aug 19, turned into a celebration of patriotism in ushering in the country's National Day.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak, his wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor and thousands of Malaysians celebrated the country's achievements ahead of

the stroke of midnight.

A video on the Father of Independence, Tunku Abdul Rahman, was shown before a high-spirited speech was delivered by Najib.

At the stroke of midnight, cries of "Merdeka" echoed throughout the stadium, before the audience sang the national anthem.

A concert and fireworks presentation was also held at the Petronas Twin Towers (KLCC) with thousands, including tourists, filling the KLCC Esplanade Park.

Selangor and Perlis opted to celebrate Merdeka Day last night although it is normally celebrated on the morning of Aug 31.

The celebration with the theme "Negeraku Sehati Sejiwa" (My Country, One Heart, One Soul) in both states were no less exciting, with thousands of people gathered in the spirit of patriotism.

In SELANGOR, members of the public began gathering at the Shah Alam Dataran Kemerdekaan from 8pm to witness a colourful parade of about 10 contingents comprising government agencies, non-governmental organisations and state subsidiary companies.

A traditional dance performance which combined the cultures of the various races in Malaysia by about 100 school children was also presented.

Also present at the event were Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mohamed Azmin Ali, state exco members and senior state government officials.

In PERLIS, the public began filling the Tuanku Syed Putra Stadium in Kangar as early as 5pm to view an exhibition of the history of the nation before and after independence by government departments and agencies as well

as non-governmental organisations.

A parade comprising 75 contingents with 5,500 participants representing government departments and agencies, non-governmental organisations and political parties began at 10.30pm.

The Raja Muda of Perlis Tuanku Syed Faizuddin Putra Jamalullail was present at the celebration, which was also attended by Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Azlan Man and state dignitaries.

In PERAK, the celebration at Ipoh City Square was attended by the Sultan of Perak, Sultan Nazrin Shah and Raja Permaisuri of Perak Tuanku Zara Salim, and was filled with various events that included cultural presentations, a Tae Kwan Do demonstration and musical performances.

The event was kicked off earlier with the Ipoh Merdeka Ride

organised by the Ipoh City Council.

In KELANTAN, the celebration was held at the Kuala Krai Malaysian Civil Defence Agency office with local song performances, followed by a lucky draw and "Dikir Gegar Merdeka Negeraku" concert.

This was followed by a video showcasing the development of Kuala Krai before the opening speech by Dabong state assemblyman Datuk Ramzi Ab Rahman, who is also Kuala Krai Umno division chief.

In KUALA TERENGGANU, thousands gathered at the Shahbandar Square in Kuala Terengganu to enjoy cultural performances and patriotic songs.

The ceremony, which began at 10pm, was attended by Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Ahmad Razif Abdul Rahman and state assembly speaker Datuk Zubir Embong.

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Philippine Secretary of Foreign Affairs and chairman of the SEA Games 2019 Organising Committee Alan Peter S. Cayetano holding the SEA Games Federation flag after receiving it from federation president Tunku Tan Sri Imran Tuanku Jaafar (second from right) during the 29th SEA Games closing ceremony.



Sept 4 a public holiday

KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak last night declared Sept 4 as a public holiday in appreciation of the outstanding achievements of the Malaysian contingent in the 29th SEA Games.

"It is not easy to declare a holiday because Malaysia has too many public holidays but since we have achieved an outstanding result in the SEA Games through the unwavering support of the various races and the excellent performance of our athletes, on behalf of the government, I declare Sept 4 as a public holiday," he said in his Merdeka Day speech at the National Stadium in Bukit Jalil after the SEA Games closing ceremony.

Najib said the government decided to award a public holiday in recognition of the sacrifices made by the athletes to achieve the most memorable result in the history of the SEA Games. - Bernama