



Nuri helicopters performing a fly-past during the National Day parade at Dataran Merdeka yesterday.

ASHRAF SHAMSUL/THESUN

Showcase of **unity, patriotism**

> Najib leads crowd of 50,000 in shouts of 'Merdeka' during National Day celebrations in capital city

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KUALA LUMPUR: The nation put its best foot forward in a show of unity and

patriotism for the Merdeka Day celebrations yesterday, by reminiscing the historic moment independence was achieved 60 years ago.

A mammoth crowd of over 50,000

gathered at Dataran Merdeka for the three-hour spectacle that showcased the country's history, culture, unity and achievements in a grand parade.

The celebrations started with a re-enactment of historical events - from the colonial era to the formation of Malaysia.

The *Negaraku* was then played, followed by a 14-gun salute representing the states in

the country.

The crowd echoed in united roars of patriotism when Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak later led them in shouting out "Merdeka!" seven times, as the Father of Malaysia Tunku Abdul Rahman had done in 1957.

The National Day parade was also graced by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Muhammad V, who was accompanied at the main stage by Najib and his wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and other senior government officials.

A video showing the country's achievements since independence was also projected on giant screens, followed by a play on a battle between security forces and communist terrorists.

The parade featured eight performance segments, namely nationality, unity, animation and creative industry, SEA Games and Para Asean athletes, National Transformation 2050, public order, national security and integrity.

One of the highlights was the display of assets by the police, army, navy and air force that featured superbikes, armoured personnel carriers and artillery equipment.

The national SEA Games 2017 contingent, led by national cyclist Azizulhasni Awang, received cheers and applause as they passed.

The crowd was also treated with an airshow performed by the Royal Malaysian Air Force using four Hawk aircraft, four F/A 18Ds and four Sukhoi SU 30 MKM fighter jets.

The ceremony concluded with the *Negaraku*, with shouts of "Merdeka!", as Sultan Muhammad V left Dataran Merdeka, followed by Najib and his wife.

Some 18,000 participants from the public and private sectors took part in the colourful and vibrant parade.

This year's celebration retained last year's theme of "Negaraku: Sehati, Sejiwa" (My Country: One heart, One soul).



BERNAMAPIX

National Service participants carrying the Jalur Gemilang during the march past.