



Nurses of Pantai Hospital Kuala Lumpur with two babies born on National Day at the hospital - Aidan Reily Kam (left) and another who is yet to be named.



A march-past in front of the VIP stand in Bandar Perda, Bukit Mertajam during the Penang Merdeka Day celebrations yesterday.

Low-key celebrations for N-Day

KUALA LUMPUR: The national-level 52nd Merdeka Day was celebrated at the Parliament Square yesterday morning in a low-key but colourful 40-minute ceremony with a limited participation of about 8,600 people.

Carrying the theme "1Malaysia: People First, Performance Now," the event was confined to a rally and performances without the usual parade of contingents and participation of schoolchildren due to the influenza A(H1N1) pandemic and the fasting month.

Those involved were National Service trainees, Teachers' Training Institute students, government servants and representatives of statutory bodies and private sectors.

About 1,600 people, including cabinet ministers, members of parliament, Speakers of the Dewan Negara and Dewan Rakyat, ambassadors and for-

eign envoys, were present.

The rally began at 8am soon after the arrival of Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Mizan Zainal Abidin and Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Nur Zahirah.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak and wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, and Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin and wife Puan Sri Norainee Abd Rahman arrived 10 minutes earlier.

The VIPs were greeted by about 10,000 cheering flag-bearers lining the road for a distance of 1.58km from the roundabout near Bank Negara to Parliament Square.

There was also a fly-past by seven helicopters, a guard of honour, and a 14-gun salute.

This was followed by the reading of Rukun Negara by seven academicians representing all the major races in the

country and joined by 52 representatives of the academic community and 500 members of the security forces. There was also a choir performance of the patriotic song "Malaysia Tanah Airku" by the Association of Wives of Ministers and Deputy Ministers (Bakti) and a cultural dance.

In **SEBERANG PERAI**, the Penang National Day celebration was a small-scale affair with about 500 people turning up at the event. The celebration, held outside the MPSP building in Bandar Perda, Bukit Mertajam, started at about 9am and involved a short parade.

Present were Penang Governor Tun Abdul Rahman Abbas and Toh Puan Majimor Shariff, Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng and wife Betty Chew, Deputy Chief Minister (I) Mansor Othman, Deputy Chief Minister (II) Prof Dr P. Ramasamy and other executive councillors.

The crowd outside Parliament House in Kuala Lumpur where the 52nd anniversary celebrations of Malaysia's National Day were held.

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Demolish walls that separate us, says Najib

KUALA LUMPUR: Likening unity to a bridge that connects the people and disunity to walls that divide them, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak in his first National Day message urged the people to restore the bridge and tear down the walls that separate them.

He said the passing of time had witnessed the bridge, which was painstakingly built by the nation's forefathers, now shaken by certain quarters that attempted to disrupt the peace.

He said these groups were exploiting the fine lines that existed in a multi-ethnic society, be it political, religious or social, to serve their own warped agenda.

Noting that the biggest challenge facing Malaysians was to restore the bridge and demolish the walls that separated them, Najib said the people should continue

to manage success, building upon what the country had achieved "by cultivating the principles we have long nurtured".

"Let us remember that what we now enjoy may not become better, instead it may deteriorate if neglected.

"The proof is in the world's history, where poorly managed success ends in failure," he said in the message in conjunction with Malaysia's 52nd Independence Day aired over national television on Sunday night.

Najib also spoke of the country's history after gaining independence and said many had predicted its demise.

"Despite the predictions, we have proven the sceptics wrong. In the five decades since our independence we have emerged among the leaders of the developing nations," he said.

The prime minister said the underlying secret to this success was none other than unity among the people of various ethnicity and beliefs, and the conviction to the philosophy of celebrating diversity as a source of strength rather than "a point of discord that causes disunity".

He reminded the people that they, however, could not afford to rely on the past or rest upon their laurels without striving to create new successes.

Najib also said the government had introduced more effective policies that would propel the country forward towards becoming a developed nation.

Among them, he said, was the introduction of the 1Malaysia concept based on the Federal Constitution and Rukun Negara as the foundation for the government's goals. - Bernama