

Show of pride at golden jubilee

> People from all walks of life turn up at Padang Merdeka to celebrate the country's 50th anniversary



NORMAN HUI/THESUN

RHYTHM OF HARMONY ... students perform during the Malaysia Day celebration at the Padang Merdeka yesterday.

KUCHING: The setting was perfect to celebrate a 50th birthday.

The weather was kind – cool without the stifling heat suffered not too long ago – providing the ideal environment for spirits to surge. The dark clouds over the city provided an excellent cover against the sun as thousands from all walks of life thronged Padang Merdeka to take part in celebrations to mark the 50th anniversary of Malaysia.

This is the third year that Malaysia Day is a national public holiday, signifying its historical significance to all Malaysians.

The significance of the celebrations was further enhanced with the presence of Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah, Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Haminah, Sarawak Yang di-Pertua Negeri Tun Abang Muhammad Salahuddin Abang Barieng, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak, Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin and Sarawak Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud.

A video presentation on the 50th anniversary of Sarawak joining Sabah (Singapore left in 1965) to form Malaysia was played on the huge screen at the padang.

A total of 92 contingents from the public and private sectors, the police, army, non-governmental organisations and sports association took part in the parade.

Retired policemen and former servicemen, as well as a contingent comprising the 27 ethnic groups in Sarawak, also made their presence felt at the parade.

The celebration started with the firing of the traditional 21-gun salute as the King inspected the royal guard of honour.

Almost simultaneously, jets from the Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) flew over the padang several times to enhance the hum of joyful voices with their thundering sounds.

The celebrations ended with a harmony dance performed by about 1,500 dancers from local institutions of higher learning.



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PART OF HISTORY ... Former British and Australian soldiers, who served during the Malayan Emergency, taking part in the parade.



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