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COLOUR, POMP, SPLENDOUR

➤ It's patriotism to the fore as nation celebrates 57th Independence Day

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KUALA LUMPUR: The 57th Independence Day celebration was a picture of colour, pomp and splendour as thousands of schoolchildren, armed forces personnel, civil servants and private sector employees displayed their patriotic spirit at Dataran Merdeka here yesterday.

Thousands of Malaysians as well as foreign tourists flocked to witness the celebration, which was graced by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah and Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Hajah Haminah.

The royal couple was met on arrival by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak, his wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin and his wife Puan Sri Norainee Abdul Rahman.

Cabinet ministers, foreign envoys and invited guests were also present to watch the march past and the two-hours of exhilarating performances.

Political differences were put aside as leaders from opposition parties showed their patriotic spirit with their participation in the celebration.

The crowd, including the participants, had gathered as early as 6.30am to take their places.

The ceremony began at 8.15am with the Negaraku sung to a 14-gun salute fired from an artillery battery.

The King inspected a guard-of-

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NATIONAL DAY JOY ... Students joyfully wave flags and sing patriotic songs at the 57th Merdeka celebrations at Dataran Merdeka in Kuala Lumpur yesterday. 'Malaysia...Di Sini Lahirnya Sebuah Cinta' is the official theme of this year's Merdeka. The theme is taken from the lyrics of the song 'Warisan' popularised by the late Sudirman Arshad.

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