

BIG DAY OF CELEBRATION

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It starts with arrival of king, followed by firing of cannons and singing of 'Negaraku'

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WITH the Merdeka parade making a comeback this year after muted celebrations in 2020 and 2021 due to the pandemic, Dataran Merdeka has once again become a hive of activity.

Checks on social media yesterday found many people making their way to Dataran Merdeka for the 65th National Day celebration as early as 5am.

At 8.05am, Yang di-Pertuan Agong Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah and Raja Permaisuri Agong Tunku Azizah Aminah Maimunah Iskandariah arrived in a horse-drawn carriage from Menara DBKL to Dataran Merdeka.

This was followed by five helicopters carrying the Jalur Gemilang and the firing of 14 can-



Royal Malaysian Air Force transport planes making a fly-past at Dataran Merdeka yesterday. PIC BY ASWADI ALIAS

nons representing the states and federal territories in Malaysia by the 41st ceremonial battery of the Royal Artillery Regiment led by Lieutenant-Colonel Mohamad Asri Che Wil.

The *Negaraku* was then played, together with the raising of the Jalur Gemilang, by 65 musicians from RTM Orkestra led by music director Datuk Mokhzani Ismail.

After the *Negaraku*, this year's National Day theme song *Keluarga Malaysia Teguh Bersama* was sung by the audience along with 12 artistes.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Ismail Sabri Yaakob arrived at 7.45am.

Present were Senior Defence Minister Datuk Seri Hishammuddin Hussein, Finance Minister Tengku Datuk Seri Zafrul Tengku Abdul Aziz, Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wee Ka Siong, Health Minister Khairy Jamaluddin, Education Minister Datuk Dr Radzi Jidin and Environment and Water Minister Datuk Seri Tuan Ibrahim Tuan Man.

It is estimated that over 50,000 visitors gathered at Dataran Merdeka yesterday.

There were more than 16,000 participants in the celebration, with 369 land and 68 air assets displayed, as well as 76 animals from the K9 unit.