



The Dataran Merdeka fountain is a popular spot for rest and respite. Menara DBKL in the background is illuminated with the Jalur Gemilang. — Photos: IZZRAFIQ ALIAS/The Star (29 JUNE 2023) PIO, the star

# Iconic square brimming with life

ONE of the most famous landmarks in the heart of Kuala Lumpur is Dataran Merdeka, where Malaya's independence from the British was declared.

The square is among the earliest open spaces introduced in Malaya, at the heart of the colonial government administration district.

British colonialists used the giant field to host cricket and football matches in addition to ceremonies and parades.

After the country gained its independence, people continued to play cricket on the Dataran Merdeka pitch and spectators could watch from the nearby Selangor Club.

In addition to hosting National Day parades and New Year's Eve countdowns, Dataran Merdeka still serves as a venue for gatherings, exhibitions, recreational and sporting events as well as festive

celebrations throughout the year.

Thousands of football fans thronged Dataran Merdeka in January to watch the first leg of the AFF Cup semi-final match on the big screen.

During Ramadan, Dataran Merdeka was the go-to picnic spot for Muslims to break their fast.

When Dataran Merdeka hosts events, Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL) closes the adjacent Jalan Raja to divert traffic.

When Jalan Raja is closed, families will gather at the field while youths zip around on bikes and scooters in the evenings and on weekends.

During the day, tourists use the square as a starting point to explore the capital's heritage buildings.

Dataran Merdeka continues to be an important public space for social and civic life.



Many city folk flock to Dataran Merdeka for picnics, especially during weekends.



Right: A photo of Tunku Abdul Rahman declaring Malaya's independence at Dataran Merdeka is displayed at the square.



Dataran Merdeka is a popular spot for families to enjoy activities.



Cricket has been played at the public square since colonial days.