

## Brunei-Singapore Interaction Programme 2008 - National Day Parade

Wednesday, 20 August 2008

During the Singapore phase, we were also given the golden opportunity to observe the 43rd National Day Parade of Singapore which was held on the 9th August 2008. Channel News Asia was airing the event and millions of viewers at home watched with anticipation. The performance was held on a floating platform in Marina Bay with a breathtaking night scene of Singapore city and the iconic Merlion on the right-hand view, while the newly constructed Singapore Flyer sat with magnificence to the left. It was a spectacular day with a sea of people in red and white, symbolising the colours of the Singapore national flag. The level of patriotism and nationalism expressed by the locals was simply amazing.

The event commenced at approximately five in the evening. Before the show began, a large screen on stage played composed videos and songs, adding to the cheerful ambience and patriotic atmosphere. The weather was cool and breezy, with hints of incoming light showers. However, the organizers were more than prepared for the weather. There were goodie bags waiting for us on our respective seats with items including a poncho. There were also lots of props such as air gloves to stimulate audience involvement. Additionally, the organizers arranged a competition. In our individual goodie bags, there were trash bags with numbers corresponding to a lucky draw card that we were supposed to keep. At the end of the parade, these trash bags were collected and the respective numbers entered into a lucky draw. We felt that this was a very creative initiative to ensure cleanliness.

After the arrival of the president, Sellapan Ramanathan, the main performances kicked off. We were in awe of the brilliant colors at each performance. There is no doubt that the people of Singapore truly cherish their value of meritocracy as cultural elements of dominant races in Singapore were evenly displayed in the performances, namely Chinese, Malay, and Indian. Although it drizzled, the rain did not curb the merry mood, instead everyone was even more cheery and full of spirit. One of the highlights of the day was the majestic air show, performed by the F-16 fighter jets and the Royal SAF aerobatic team, Blackknights. Everyone looked up to the sky admiring and proud of the thrilling maneuvers. As the day darkened, Singapore city was in full glow showing her nighttime beauty.

The incredible performances ended with a grand finale of stunning fireworks display. Everyone left the scene with their heads up high and simultaneously breathed in the still lingering patriotic air. We were all equally amazed with their nationalistic spirits and their full effort in putting together a great performance. We could easily notice the high level of cooperation and coordination to make the day even more memorable. Even as Bruneians we were touched by the people's devotion to their country. We are now even more inspired to love and give more to our country, Brunei Darussalam.