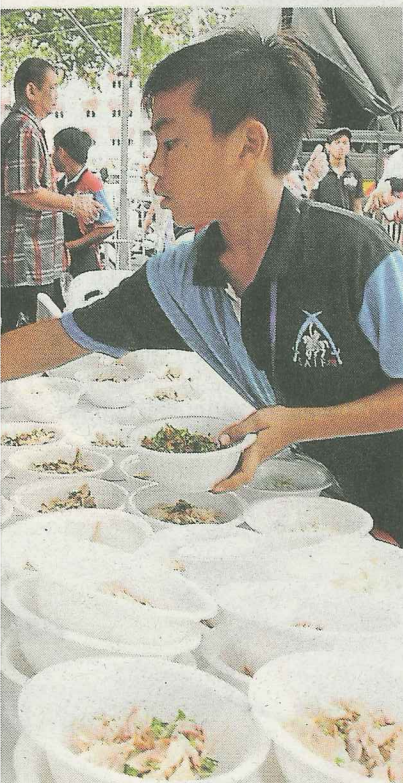




Sultan Ibrahim Sultan Iskandar meeting the people during the high tea event held in conjunction with his birthday celebrations.



Perdana Menteri Fadilah Lebar (left) and her staff serving mee soto at the high tea.



# Splendid royal birthday bash

Thousands flock to grand celebration to catch a glimpse of Sultan

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Photos by **LIM CHENG KIAT**

**MUAR:** The royal town came alive once again with a hive of activities in conjunction with the four-day birthday celebration of Johor Ruler Sultan Ibrahim Sultan Iskandar.

The celebrations, which began on Nov 21 with *tahlil* and thanksgiving prayers at Masjid Sultan Abu Bakar, ended with a dazzling fireworks display and processions of decorated

boats along Muar River.

It was the second time the grand celebration was held in conjunction with the Sultan's birthday in Muar.

The town made history last year when it was declared Bandar Maharani, becoming the state's first royal town declared by the Sultan during his birthday celebration.

Other events in this year's celebrations included an investiture ceremony held at Dewan Jubli Intan Sultan Ibrahim, a tea party that was attended by thousands, and officiat-



**Cake out:** The Ruler (third from left) admiring the birthday cakes on display during the event. Also present were Raja Zarith (right behind Sultan), Muhyiddin (far left) and Khaled (second from left).

ing of Masjid As-Syakirin in Bakri.

Sultan Ibrahim, accompanied by his consort, Raja Zarith Sofia Sultan Idris Shah and their children, including Tunku Mahkota of Johor, Tunku Ismail were present at most of the events.

Many locals were delighted and marveled with all the various activities and to be part of the celebrations held in Bandar Maharani.

At the grand tea party at Dataran Tanjung Emas last Saturday, thousands flocked to catch a glimpse of the Ruler together with members of the royal family.

Self-employed Amir Abdullah, 34, said he was lucky to have time off this year to witness the celebration with his family.

"We did not have the opportunity

to join the grand celebration last year although we are from Muar because I was working.

"I feel so proud to be able to see the Sultan and the Royal family members in person for the first time," he added.

Housewife Jun Abu Yamin, 50, said she and family had planned for a week to visit the town during the celebration.

"As a Muar resident, we feel proud of living in the royal town and hope it will continue to progress in years to come," she added.

Visitor Ee Choon Seah, 45, said she wanted her three children to know who is their Ruler and decided to bring them to the town to have a closer look.

"The children are very happy and

impressed, they have seen the Sultan from far when the ruler was traveling in the state on a superbike during the yearly Kembara Mahkota event.

"For me, it is important for the younger generation to learn more about their state," said the housewife.

Deputy Prime Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, Johor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin, local and foreign dignitaries were also present at the event.

The crowd were entertained by various cultural dances, band performance by the police and other activities.

There were also stalls serving various kinds of local delicacies and even fast food.

