

10 NOV 1996
Deepavali-Roundup
MALAYSIANS FLOCK TO OPEN HOUSES FOR DEEPAVALI

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 10 (Bernama) -- Malaysians of the Hindu faith today celebrated Deepavali on a moderate scale.

The "Festival of Lights" was observed in a harmonious atmosphere with the Malays, Chinese and other races visiting their Indian friends and colleagues to wish them Happy Deepavali.

Like other festivals in Malaysia, open houses were held to welcome visitors and well-wishers.

Works Minister and MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu hosted an open house at the Chong Hwa Chinese Independent Secondary School at Jalan Ipoh here.

His party deputy Datuk S. Subramaniam, who is the Deputy Minister of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs, entertained well-wishers at his residence in Petaling Jaya.

About 1,500 people were at the Parti Gerakan open house at the party's headquarters in Jalan Pudu Ulu here.

Well-known film director Datuk L. Krishnan also held an open house for 600 orphans and the less fortunate at the St John Institution here.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim were among the Malaysians who visited Indian leaders celebrating the occasion.

Anwar, with his wife Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, called at Samy Vellu's open house where he was given the honour of cutting the Deepavali cake for all the guests.

Anwar left after 45 minutes for the open house of Subramaniam in Petaling Jaya.

Also present at the open houses of both MIC leaders were Transport Minister and MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, Umno Wanita chief and Deputy Health Minister Datuk Dr Siti Zaharah Sulaiman, Youth and Sports Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin, Entrepreneur Development Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamad and several other Cabinet ministers.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is away on official visits to west African countries.

Many people took advantage of the long weekend holiday to return to their kampungs or check into holiday resorts.

In PERAK, thousands of Hindus thronged the temples this morning to offer their prayers.

Besides the traditional rites of an oil bath before going to the temple, the eldest son in the family was also required to break a coconut as offerings.

Meanwhile, open houses were held to welcome visitors from all races in the true Malaysian tradition.

The family of Perak MIC chief Datuk K. Kumaran hosted a Deepavali open house at Dewan Merdeka in Tapah yesterday. Kumaran, who is Deputy Rural Development Minister and Tapah MP, is accompanying Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on his official visit to west African countries.

Perak MIC deputy chief Datuk G. Rajoo will host an open house in his constituency at Dewan Besar Sungai Sumun from 4pm to 6pm. Rajoo is Hutan Melintang assemblyman.

State MIC Information Chief S. Veerasingham will also hold an open house on Wednesday in his constituency in Sungkai from 3pm to 6pm.

In KEDAH, several MIC leaders held open houses to entertain guests and well-wishers.

State MIC chairman S. Saravanan, who is also State Executive Councillor for Works, received visitors at his residence in Sungai Petani.

In MELAKA, Hindus flocked to temples this morning today to offer their prayers before holding open houses to receive friends and well-wishers at their homes.

State MIC chief R. Raghavan, who is Bukit Asahan assemblyman, entertained state executive councillors, political party leaders, department heads and community leaders at his open house in Jasin.

The Melaka Zoo, Crocodile Park, Butterfly Park, Ayer Keroh Recreational Park, the Historical Complex at Bandar Hilir, Klebang and Tanjung Kling beaches were a hive of activity since yesterday as hundreds of visitors took advantage of the public holiday today and the long weekend to visit these places.

In PERLIS, the drizzle in the morning did not damper the people to attend the open house of the Perlis Tamil Youth Bell Club chairman S. Subramaniam at Taman Choo Kee, near Kangar.

State MIC Youth vice-head S. Sreetharan and Information chief K.S. Maniam would hold open houses at their respective residence in Arau and Telok Kachang tonight.

In SHAH ALAM, Selangor Menteri Besar Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib and Health Minister Datuk Chua Jui Meng were among the hundreds of guests who attended the open house of Health Ministry parliamentary secretary Datuk M. Mahalingam in his residence at Section 7.

State Executive Councillor for Unity and Consumer Affairs S.S. Rajagopal held an open house at SRJK (T) Batu Empat, Jalan Bukit Kemuning, Klang.

State Legislative Assembly Speaker Datuk Haji Onn Ismail and Barisan Nasional assemblymen were among those present at the open house.

Many of the Hindus, when interviewed, said the country's good economic showing enabled them to celebrate Deepavali on a grand scale as compared to previous years.

In JOHOR BAHRU, people of all races ushered in the Deepavali celebrations by visiting friends and colleagues.

Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman and his wife Prof Dr Jamilah Ariffin attended the open house of Johor MIC chief Datuk K.S Balakrisnan.

Meanwhile, the people here took advantage of the public holiday and long weekend to flock to the Lido beach with their families. -- BERNAMA