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Joyful Raya with prayers, open house

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun.- Malaysians today celebrated Hari Raya Aidilfitri, a day after the Chinese New Year celebrations, in a spirit of multiracial harmony and goodwill.

For Muslims the celebrations began with prayers at mosques and surau followed by the traditional open house where relatives and friends of various races were entertained to festive goodies.

At the Istana Negara, about 450 local VIPs, Cabinet Ministers and foreign dignitaries thronged the palace to wish the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Ja'afar and Raja Permaisuri Agong Tuanku Najihah Selamat Hari Raya.

The visitors feasted on festive delicacies like satay, rendang, leman and ketupat.

Earlier, the King and Queen, accompanied by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, performed the solat Aidilfitri at the National Mosque together with thousands of people.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim was also present.

Hundreds also queued up at Dr Mahathir's official residence Sri Perdana from 7.30am.

On hand to greet them were Dr Mahathir and Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali and members of the Prime Minister's family.

There was a steady stream of well-wishers when the gates opened at 10am and they included Cabinet Ministers, members of the diplomatic corp, members of several political parties and company heads.

Among the well-wishers were a group of Bosnian children spending their fourth Hari Raya in Malaysia and students of the SAL group who could not go home for the celebrations.

Several families also took the opportunity to pose for photographs with Dr Mahathir and Dr Siti Hasmah and some even requested for autographs. The open house serving traditional festive delicacies such as rendang, ketupat, leman and kuah kacang was held until 6pm today.

Meanwhile, at the Putra World Trade Centre, many visitors came to Anwar's open house which started at 10am.

The open house, held in two sessions, one for VIPs and one for the public, drew hundreds of well-wishers.

The visitors were welcomed by Anwar and Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail and their family.

Among the VIP visitors were Cabinet Ministers, diplomats, members of several political parties and company heads.

Also present were Anwar's former history teacher Muzaffar Tate and Dr Wan Azizah's biology teacher Elizabeth Periathamby.

All well-wishers were served with the traditional delicacies of the different races.

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