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CNY-Roundup

MALAYSIANS FLOCK TO CHINESE NEW YEAR OPEN HOUSE IN SPIRIT OF UNITY

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 7 (Bernama) -- People from all walks of life flocked to the traditional open house to join the Chinese community in ushering in the Year of the Ox today in true Malaysian spirit of unity and hospitality.

As in previous years, the open house held by the MCA and Gerakan here drew a full stream of well-wishers, including foreign dignitaries, tourists, the handicapped, and the young and old.

The MCA open house at the Dewan Lee San Choon of Wisma MCA in Jalan Ampang was the first stop for the guests of honour, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamad Ali and Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and his wife Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Ismail.

On hand to welcome them were MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik, who is the Transport Minister, and his wife Datin Seri Ena Ling and other party leaders.

The guests of honour were accorded a grand reception with cultural dances and lion dance performance.

Well-wishers were greeted by a spread of mouth-watering traditional fare and Malaysian delicacies which has come to characterise the festivals celebrated by Malaysians.

Besides sharing in celebrating the festive occasion, visitors also took the opportunity to catch up with old friends and exchange greetings.

Despite the fasting month, Muslims came in droves to wish the Chinese leaders a "Gong Xi Fa Cai" while children and even adults posed for photos with Cabinet ministers to keep as mementoes.

Dr Mahathir's entourage later proceeded to the Gerakan open house held at the Gerakan headquarters at Dewan Wawasan in Menara PGRM, Cheras.

Gerakan President Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik, the Primary Industries Minister, and other party leaders, were on hand to welcome Dr Mahathir and Anwar and other Cabinet ministers.

The reception included lion dance performance and traditional dances.

In IPOH, a morning downpour did not dampen the spirit for celebration as friends and relatives made their rounds of open house.

Chinese leaders and political parties here will hold open house tomorrow and after the Hari Raya Aidil Fitri.

The state Chinese Chamber of Commerce and state MCA will hold open house tomorrow while Dr Lim Keng Yaik will have one at his constituency in Beruas at the Dewan Ku Tien in Air Tawar on Monday.

The state-level Gerakan party open house will be held at Wisma Gerakan on Tuesday.

In KUANTAN, the festive mood filled the air with the Chinese community holding open house for relatives and friends.

As it is still the fasting month, packages of mandarin oranges, groundnuts and drinks were distributed to Muslim well-wishers as take-away gifts.

In KUALA TERENGGANU, state Environment Development, Health and Consumer Affairs Committee chairman Wong Foon Meng held open house for non-Muslims at his residence in Jalan Air Jernih.

He will have another open house for the Muslim community at Dewan Tunku Abdul Rahman next Friday.

In PULAU PINANG, about 5,000 visitors attended open house hosted by the Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon at the Guest House in Jalan

Macalister here.

Dr Koh and his wife Puan Sri Chui Kah Peng welcomed the guests, among them the Yang Dipertua Negeri Tun Hamdan Sheikh Tahir and wife Toh Puan Siti Zainab Baharuddin.

In a double festival message, Dr Koh said the state would not just want to be a spectator as the nation entered the information technology era.

"The state will take steps to give exposure to its citizens in the development of information technology and will support to make the Multimedia Super Corridor (MSC) a success," he added.

In that respect, he said, school students would be exposed to multimedia through various programmes organised by PenangNet.

Also present at the open house were Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Mohd Shariff Omar and deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Dr Ibrahim Saad and their wives.

In SEREMBAN, Negeri Sembilan Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohd Isa Abdul Samad and wife, Puan Sri Hazizah Tumin, were among 1,000 guests at the state MCA open house held at the Dewan Majlis Perbandaran Seremban from 10 a.m. to 12 noon.

Speaking on the occasion, Mohd Isa said unity and political stability in the country should be preserved in order for the nation to achieve developed status.

Among those who attended were Deputy Finance Minister and also state MCA Liason Committee chairman Datuk Wong See Wah and leaders from UMNO and MIC. -- BERNAMA

DC LDB