

31 JAN 1999

Thaipusam-Holiday

HINDU TEMPLE WANTS THAIPUSAM DAY TO BE NATIONAL HOLIDAY

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 31 (Bernama) -- The Sri Maha Mariamman Temple in a memorandum today appealed to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to declare the Thaipusam Day a national holiday.

Temple officials handed over the memorandum to Malaysian Indian Congress (MIC) President Datuk Seri S.Samy Vellu at Batu Caves where the Thaipusam celebrations were being held.

Speaking to reporters, Samy Vellu said that this matter had been raised with Dr Mahathir on several occasions in the past.

"However what we got in reply was.....go try and get it as a state holiday first in states where it is not a holiday at present."

"...We are contacting state governments for Thaipusam to be declared a state holiday. If we can get the various states to declare the day as a holiday then we can appeal to the Federal Government to make it a national holiday," Samy Vellu said.

Thaipusam Day is a state holiday at present in Selangor, Pulau Pinang, Perak, Negeri Sembilan and Johor.

Samy Vellu, who is also Federal Works Minister, said he would seek meetings with the Chief Ministers and Menteris Besar of the other states to discuss this holiday matter.

"We have to explain why we want it to be a holiday.....why Thaipusam is important and then appeal to the states to declare the holiday."

"It is an on-going process. We hope to achieve this may be in a few years from now... state by state," he added.

--BERNAMA

APG AAM