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Last Deepavali of millennium celebrated joyously

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - Deepavali celebrations today were filled with joyous revelry, a fitting tribute to the triumph of good over evil, and to usher in the new as it is the last one celebrated this millennium.

MIC president and Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu hosted an enormous gathering of both the political elite and ordinary Malaysians at the Chung Hwa High School hall on Jalan St Thomas.

Among those who attended were Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his wife Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali. Also present were Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and other members of the Cabinet.

MIC deputy president and Deputy Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk S. Subramaniam also held an open house at his residence in Petaling Jaya.

In Shah Alam, the Festival of Lights was celebrated on a grander scale compared to the last two years by many Hindus in Selangor.

In wishing Hindus a Happy Deepavali, Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Abu Hassan Omar said he was happy that many people were celebrating the festival on a grander scale than the past two to three years.

"The people must thank the Barisan Nasional Government for taking bold and positive measures to expedite economic recovery. It is because of the positive economic growth that people are now able to celebrate festivals on a more lavish scale this year," he added.

In Alor Star, Hindus held their open house to celebrate the Festival of Lights with their non-Hindu friends in true Malaysian tradition.

State Executive Councillor Datuk V. Saravanan held an open house at Taman Petani Jaya, Sungai Petani for hundreds of well-wishers from 11am to 5pm.

About 1,000 guests attended an open house in Bukit Mertajam, Penang, hosted by State PPP chairman Dr Loga Bala Mohan at his house in Lengkok Taman Bukit.

They included State Education, Economic Planning and Information Committee chairman Datuk Dr Toh Kin Woon and State Assemblyman for Bukit Minyak Datuk Liang Thau Sang.

In Johor Baru, some 600 relatives and friends attended the Deepavali open house hosted by Johor MIC chief and Pasir Gudang State Assemblyman Datuk K.S. Balakrishnan at his residence in Bandar Baru Uda.

Among the guests were Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman and his wife Datin Prof Dr Jamilah Ariffin.

In Malacca, most parts of Malacca town, the A Famosa Waterworld and the Golf Resort in Alor Gajah were packed with tourists, reducing traffic to a crawl.

Chief Minister Datuk Seri Abu Zahar Isnin and the Yang di-Pertua Negeri, Tun Syed Ahmad Shahabuddin, were among those who visited the house of State MIC chief and Bukit Asahan Assemblyman Datuk R. Raghavan in Taman Maju, Jasin.

The Chief Minister later visited the residence of former PPP leader, Tan Sri Dr R.P. Lingham.

Although Hindus are a minority in Kelantan, Bernama reports that the celebration was no less joyous as they held open house for relatives and friends.

The Kelantan MIC held an open house at the home of its chairman M.

Kupusamy in Lapan Kabu, Pahi, Kuala Krai.

In Kuching, there was a bigger Deepavali celebration this year as Deepavali fell on a weekend.

In Kangar, Hindus and others headed for Kuala Perlis en route to Langkawi to take advantage of the long weekend holidays to visit the resort island.

Long queues were formed as they waited patiently to board the ferries that would take them to Langkawi.

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