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Request for Thaipusam to be made national holiday

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - A memorandum to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad that Thaipusam be declared a national holiday was today handed over to the Malaysian Indian Congress.

Sri Maha Mariamman Temple Dhevastanam chairman R. Nadarajah handed over the memorandum to MIC president Datuk Seri S Samy Vellu in Batu Caves today.

Thaipusam is a State holiday in Penang, Perak, Selangor, Negri Sembilan and Johor.

Speaking to reporters, Samy Vellu said the issue had been raised several times in the past but the Federal Government asked him to refer the matter to the States where it was not a holiday.

"In most of these States we are having discussions to get a holiday for Thaipusam. I believe that if we get all the States to agree we can apply to the Federal Government to declare a national holiday," he said.

Samy Vellu, who is also Works Minister, said he would meet the Chief Ministers and Menteris Besar of those States and explain the importance of Thaipusam for Hindus.

"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."

"I do not think the matter will be resolved very fast as it is an ongoing process. Even in the four States where there is a holiday, we got it after 10 to 15 years of work. We hope to get (a holiday) in a few years time State by State," he said.

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