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Day of celebration for everyone

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - Malaysians from all walks of life today joined in the Deepavali celebrations, true to the spirit of goodwill and harmony.

Huge crowds turned up at open houses hosted by their Hindu friends throughout the country.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad joined thousands at the open house hosted by Works Minister and MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu.

Dr Mahathir, accompanied by Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, was given a warm welcome by the crowd when he arrived at Dewan Kong Chen at the Chung Hwa School in Jalan Ipoh at 10am.

Also at the open house were Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, his wife Datin Seri Endon Mahmood, and other Barisan Nasional leaders.

Samy Vellu said he was thankful that everyone had joined in the celebrations.

"I hope and pray that this happy occasion will strengthen the bond of friendship and goodwill among all Malaysians," Samy Vellu said.

He said the multi-racial nature of Deepavali celebrations in Malaysia was proof of the people's unity.

In Malacca, the Festival of Lights was celebrated on a moderate scale with the Indian community holding open houses.

They included State MIC chief Datuk R. Raghavan, who is also Bukit Asahan Assemblyman. He hosted an open house at his residence in Taman Maju, Jasin.

Among those who attended his open house were Yang di-Pertua Negeri Tun Syed Ahmad Shahabuddin, Chief Minister Datuk Wira Mohd Ali Rustam and his wife Datin Asmah Abdul Rahman, and State Exco members.

In Ipoh, State MIC chairman Datuk G. Rajoo hosted an open house at his home in Lim Garden.

Present were Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Tajol Rosli Ghazali and his wife Datin Seri Kamariah Mokri.

Tajol Rosli said the spirit of unity was evident on the eve of Deepavali at Little India, where people from all races had celebrated.

Elsewhere, Hindus also held open houses and invited their friends in the true Malaysian tradition.

In Kota Kinabalu, open houses were held for family and friends while many in the State capital took advantage of the public holiday to spend time with their families.

Chief Minister Datuk Seri Osu Sukam joined in the celebration at the house of Sabah Progressive Party (SAPP) vice-president Datuk K.A. Vanar in Likas.

Also present were SAPP president Datuk Yong Teck Lee and Sabah Barisan Nasional secretary Datuk Karim Bujang.

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