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Raya-Roundup(With Pix)

AIDILFITRI CELEBRATIONS EVEN MERRIER WITH CASH GIFT FROM GOVT

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 16 (Bernama) -- Muslims across the country welcomed the first day of Syawal this year with full gratitude in the spirit of Aidilfitri made even more joyous with the many cash gifts from the government.

As the Islamic world is troubled with all kinds of external threats particularly in Palestine and Afghanistan, Malaysian Muslims ushered in Syawal with full of gratitude for the peace and stability in this country.

After observing the fast during the whole of Ramadan, Muslims began the day ending the fasting period with solat Aidilfitri in mosques throughout the country.

After the prayers, Muslims of all age groups, took the opportunity to exchange greetings and forgive one another to strengthen their Muslim brotherhood.

At the National Mosque here, the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Syed Putra Jamalullai and the Raja Permaisuri Agong, Tuanku Fauziah Tengku Abdul Rashid, joined the faithful in offering Aidilfitri prayers.

His Majesty, clad in a pink Malay baju, arrived at the National Mosque at 8.30am, accompanied by the Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

They were joined at the solat Adilfitri by several Cabinet Ministers including Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak and Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim.

After listening to the khutbah delivered by Federal Territory Mufti Datuk Mohd Hashim Yahya, His Majesty exchanged greetings with the faithful.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir and Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali went over to the Istana Negara to wish Their Majesties "Selamat Hari Raya".

The Aidilfitri mood across the country this year was more joyous than in previous years following the government's move to present RM100 to each poor person in this country, a bonus payment of a minimum of RM1,000 to more than 900,000 civil servants and RM200 each to government pensioners.

Apart from visiting and receiving friends and serving them with various delicacies, the Muslim community in colourful dress also visited the graves of relatives to read the Yassin and recite the Al Fatihah on the occasion of Aidilfitri.

In line with tradition in this multiracial country, Muslims held open house to serve Hari Raya delicacies to their fellow non-Muslim citizens.

Even though Kuala Lumpur was quite deserted following the return of thousands of Muslims to their respective kampungs since last week, those still in the city took the opportunity to visit the open house hosted by the country's leaders.

Expatriates and foreign workers took advantage of the long holiday to visit places of entertainment and shopping complexes in Kuala Lumpur and eat at stalls and restaurants.

Other than Kuala Lumpur, the focus of non-Muslims and foreigners was also Putrajaya where Dr Mahathir and Dr Siti Hasmah hosted open house at the Prime Minister's official residence, Seri Perdana.

Thousands of Malaysians, some of them armed with cameras and children holding flowers and "Selamat Hari Raya" cards visited Seri Perdana to extend to the Prime Minister and Dr Siti Hasmah Aidilfitri greetings.

Dr Mahathir began receiving visitors as early as 10am. The open house

will be on until 1pm and then will continue from 3pm till 6pm.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi hosts open house at the Putra World Trade Centre (PWTC) from 1.30pm till 5pm.

Indonesian nationals here also visited the open house of their Ambassador here at Wisma Duta, Jalan U Thant.

In SHAH ALAM, the Sultan of Selangor, Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah, said the solat Aidilfitri with more than 5,000 Muslims at the Masjid Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah.

Selangor Menteri Besar, Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Khir Toyo, Selangor State Assembly Speaker, Datuk Seri Onn Ismail, State Executive Councillors, Selangor State Assemblymen and Members of Parliament, members of the Selangor Royal Household and senior government officers also joined the Sultan at the prayers.

His Royal Highness exchanged Hari Raya Aidilfitri greetings with the faithful.

The Sultan then visited the Selangor Royal Mausoleum in Klang.

Sultan Sharafuddin held open house on a modest scale at Istana Bukit Kayangan from 12 noon till 3pm.

Mohd Khir hosts open house at Projek Perumahan Rakyat Lembah Subang, Petaling Jaya, from 12 noon till 4pm.

He is hosting the open house in line with the people-friendly concept of the Selangor administration and this is the first time, the open house is being held away from the official residence of the Menteri Besar at Bukit Megawati, Section 7, Shah Alam.

In ALOR SETAR, Aidilfitri was celebrated joyfully by people from all walks of life even though the weather was cloudy with a light drizzle since yesterday evening.

The Sultan of Kedah, Sultan Abdul Halim Muadzam Shah, said Aidilfitri prayers at the Masjid Zahir here together with thousands of ordinary folks. Also present was Kedah Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Syed Razak Syed Zain.

The prayers were led by the Imam Besar, Sheikh Roslan Abdul Halim, who later delivered the Aidilfitri Khutbah.

In KANGAR, the Regent of Perlis, Tuanku Syed Faizuddin Jamalullail joined thousands of people for Aidilfitri prayers at the State Mosque in Arau.

His Royal Highness was accompanied by the Raja Perempuan Besar of Perlis Tengku Budriah Tengku Ismail who is his grandmother and Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim.

He then received the people at his open house at Istana Arau which is about 200 metres from the State Mosque.

In MELAKA, the Yang Dipertua Negeri, Tun Syed Ahmad Shahabuddin, said Aidilfitri prayers with more than 10,000 people at the Masjid Al-Azim in Bukit Palah.

Also present were the Chief Minister, Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam, State Assembly Speaker Datuk Amid Nordin and State Executive Councillors.

After the solat, Syed Ahmad and Mohd Ali exchanged Hari Raya Aidilfitri greetings with the people. Syed Ahmad held open house at Istana Melaka in Bukit Beruang.

The Chief Minister hosted open house at his official residence, Seri Bendahara, Bukit Peringgit.

In KUALA TERENGGANU, Sultan Mizan Zainal Abidin and Permaisuri Nur Zahirah attended Aidilfitri prayers at Masjid Al Muktafi Billah Shah, Kampung Ladang.

They were received on arrival by Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang and State Executive Councillors.

Sultan Mizan, who is also the Timbalan Yang di-Pertuan Agong, and Permaisuri Nur Zahirah held open house at Istana Maziah from 10am till 11am

for Muslims and later for non-Muslims until 11.30am.

The Menteri Besar held open house at his residence at Kampung Rusila, Marang, from 10am till 4pm.

However the Hari Raya mood was disturbed a bit by heavy rain and floods which restricted peoples' movements.

Till late this afternoon 61 people in Kemaman had been evacuated after floods hit their houses.

In KOTA BAHARU, the Sultan of Kelantan attended solat Hari Raya Aidilfitri at Masjid Muhammadi at 8.45am.

The Raja Perempuan of Kelantan also attended prayers at the mosque together with some 2,000 people.

After the solat at about 9.30am, Their Royal Highnesses received the people at Istana Balai Besar about 300 metres from the mosque. They later went over to the Kelantan Royal Mausoleum at Lundang.

Meanwhile Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat led the Aidilfitri prayers at Masjid Pulau Melaka near his residence. Some 2,000 people were present.

In KUANTAN, the Sultan of Pahang, Sultan Ahmad Shah attended Aidilfitri prayers at the State Sultan Ahmad Mosque. Also present were the Tengku Mahkota of Pahang Tengku Abdullah and the Tengku Muda of Pahang Tengku Abdul Rahman.

Pahang Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob, Information Minister Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob and State Executive Councillors were also present.

The Sultan of Pahang later held open house at Istana Abu Bakar, Pekan, while the Menteri Besar hosted open house at the Sultan Ahmad Shah Silver Jubilee Hall.

In KOTA KINABALU, Sabah Yang Dipertua Negeri Tun Haji Sakaran bin Dandai attended solat Aidilfitri together with more than 6,000 people at the State Mosque in Sembulan.

Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Lajim Haji Ukin was also present.

Tun Sakaran and his consort Toh Puan Hajah Siti Rukaiyah Panglima Abdullah later held open house, first for the VIPs and dignitaries at Istana Negeri.

Among the dignitaries at the open house were Chief Minister Datuk Chong Kah Kiat, state ministers and assistant ministers.

In KUCHING, Sarawak Yang Dipertua Negeri Tun Abang Muhammad Salahuddin Barieng attended solat Aidilfitri at Masjid Jamek in Petra Jaya together with 5,000 Muslims who included Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud.

Later Abang Muhammad Salahuddin and his consort Toh Puan Norkiah held open house for the Chief Minister, State Cabinet Ministers, State Assemblymen, Members of Parliament and dignitaries at the Istana, Petra Jaya.

The Chief Minister held open house for people from all walks of life at Stadium Perpaduan Negeri, Petra Jaya.

In NEGERI SEMBILAN, the Yang di-Pertuan Besar Tuanku Ja'afar and the Tuanku Ampuan, Tuanku Najihah attended solat Aidilfitri with the people at the Masjid Diraja Tuanku Munawir, Seri Menanti, at 9am.

They then attended a tahlil at the Royal Mausoleum in Seri Menanti. Their Royal Highnesses hosted open house at Istana Besar Seri Menanti from 10.30am till 1pm.

Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohamed Isa Abdul Samad held open house at his official residence at the Seremban Lake Gardens from 10am.

In JOHOR BAHARU, the Sultan of Johor attended Hari Raya Aidilfitri prayers together with some 4,000 Muslims at the Masjid Sultan Abu Bakar.

His Royal Highness was accompanied by the Tengku Mahkota of Johor, Tunku Ibrahim and the Tengku Bendahara of Johor Tunku Majid and Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman.

Meanwhile more than 15,000 people from all walks of life attended the open house of Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman and his wife Datin Prof Jamilah Ariffin at their residence, Saujana, from 9am till 1pm.

Tunku Ibrahim hosted open house at Istana Pasir Pelangi from 11am.

In PENANG, Aidilfitri was celebrated joyously with Muslims attending Aidilfitri prayers at mosques in all parts of the state.

The Yang Dipertua Negeri, Tun Abdul Rahman Abbas joined more than 1,000 people for Aidilfitri prayers led by the State Imam at the State Mosque from 9am.

After the prayers, Tun Abdul Rahman and his consort Toh Puan Majimor Shariff visited the open house of Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Dr Hilmi Yahaya at Balik Pulau.

More than 2,000 people including Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon and his family called at the Deputy Chief Minister's open house.

Several main streets in Georgetown were congested with people visiting the Muslim Cemetery in Jalan Perak after the solat Aidilfitri.

Deputy Agriculture Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Shariff Omar also held open house at his residence at Tasek Gelugor.

In KUALA KANGSAR, the Sultan of Perak, Sultan Azlan Shah said the solat Aidilfitri at Masjid Ubudiah.

Also present were the Raja Muda, Raja Nazrin Shah, members of the Perak Royal Household and Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Tajol Rosli Ghazali.

Tajol Rosli later held open house at his official residence in Ipoh.

-- BERNAMA

AR AR AAM