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Deepavali-Celebration

DEEPAVALI 2001 DO MODERATE BUT JOYOUS WITH TRADITIONAL OPEN HOUSE

By: Zulkefli Salleh

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 14 (Bernama) -- Deepavali or the Festival of Lights this year is being celebrated by Malaysia's Hindu community on a moderate scale across the country but no less joyous than in previous years.

The celebration of "victory of good over evil" was made merrier with visits to the open house which is now a tradition among Malaysia's multi-ethnic society.

This tradition has seen people of various races and religions visiting their neighbours, colleagues, workmates and not to mention the leaders of the various communities celebrating the occasion.

Even though gloom had settled over the world following the Sept 11 terrorist attacks on the United States and the consequent US led allied coalition strikes on Afghanistan, still joy was on the faces of Hindus and other Malaysians at the Deepavali open house. The public holiday today enabled many to call at the open house.

The mass media particularly the electronic media, like in previous years, has been giving wide coverage since early this morning to the "open house" in line with the Barisan Nasional Government's policy of promoting this concept to foster unity among the races.

The government realised that such unity was vital among the people of a multiracial country like Malaysia to ensure the nation's continued peace and stability.

The Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali have always been exemplary in the practise of this tradition. This morning they called at the open house of MIC President and Works Minister Datuk Seri S.Samy Vellu at the Sekolah Menengah Chung Hwa, Jalan Ipoh, here.

The Prime Minister and Dr Siti Hasmah also called at the open house of Deputy Minister of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Datuk S.Subramaniam, who is also MIC Deputy President, at the Dewan Sivik, Jalan Yong Shook Lin, Petaling Jaya.

In IPOH, Perak Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Tajol Rosli Ghazali and his wife Datin Seri Kamariah Mokhri called at the open house of Perak State Executive Councillor for Unity and Consumer Affairs Datuk G.Rajoo.

Also present were state executive councillors and senior government officers.

Tajol Rosli later attended the open house of several other Hindu officers in Ipoh.

Tomorrow the Perak Government will hold host the "Perak Deepavali Open House" at the Ipoh City Hall Square at 3pm and will be graced by Their Royal Highnesses Sultan Azlan Shah of Perak and the Raja Permaisuri Tuanku Bainun.

In CHERAS, the Gerakan Rakyat Malaysia party held its annual Deepavali Open House at the Menara PGRM.

In JOHOR BAHRU, Deepavali was celebrated joyously with Hindus holding open house for their friends and relatives.

Jalan Segget was the focus of Deepavali shopping this year.

In PERLIS, MIC leaders held open house and so did Hindu civil servants and others.

They expressed gratitude to the government for the half-month bonus which enabled them to celebrate the festival with even greater joy.

Perlis MIC Youth Chief S.Sreetharan held open house at Arau and

received people of various races.

In ALOR SETAR, Hindus celebrated Deepavali by hosting open house for their friends from the various other races in the country.

Kedah State Executive Councillor for Health, Unity and Welfare Services Datuk V. Saravanan held open house at his house at Taman Petani Jaya, Sungai Petani. Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Syed Razak Syed Zain was among the dignitaries who attended the open house.

In KOTA KINABALU, Deepavali was celebrated on a moderate scale with Hindus visiting their relatives and friends.

Even though Hindus form only a small group in Sabah still the merry-making was felt by all with the traditional open house.

Meanwhile the Sabah MIC will host its Deepavali open house at the Dewan Serbaguna Tanjung Aru from 6pm till 10pm.

In MELAKA, Hindus held prayers at their temples before returning home to host their annual Deepavali open house.

Recreational spots, tourist resorts and hotels were packed with both locals and foreigners.

Among the places with several hundred visitors were the Bandar Hilir Historic Complex, Ayer Keroh Recreational Park, Butterfly Park, the Melaka Zoo and the Kelebang and Tanjung Bidara beaches.

In SEREMBAN, Negeri Sembilan Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohamed Isa Abdul Samad and his wife Puan Sri Hazizah Tumin called at the open house of several Hindu leaders including that of former State Executive Councillor Datuk Muthu Palaniappan in Jalan Labu Lama.

The Menteri Besar and his wife were at Muthu's house for about 30 minutes.

The Parliamentary Secretary to the Health Ministry S. Sothinathan held open house at his residence in Jalan Tanjung Kemuning, Port Dickson.

In PENANG, Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon, Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Dr Hilmi Yahaya and House Speaker Datuk Datuk Yahaya Abdul Hamid visited the open house of State Peoples Progressive Party (PPP) Chief Datuk M. Logabala at Taman Bukit, Bukit Mertajam.

Members of the public took advantage of the holiday today to visit the Penang Fest, shopping complexes and the beaches in Batu Feringghi, Tanjung Bungah and Teluk Bahang.

In KLANG, rain which fell throughout the morning did not dampen the spirit of the Hindu community which celebrated Deepavali with visits to temples and hosting open house.

Among the temples with large crowds were the Subramaniam Temple in Port Klang and the Perumal Temple in Jalan Raja Muda Musa.

Many people also visited the open house of Selangor State Executive Councillor for Estate Housing, Mining and Unity Datuk K. Sivalingam.

Among the visitors were Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Mohamad Khir Toyo, Selangor Umno Chief Tan Sri Muhammad Haji Muhammad Taib and former Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Abu Hassan Omar.

-- BERNAMA

RIZ MUN ZS AAM