

30/12/2001

Dr M, wife among 50,000 at national Christmas open house

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - More than 50,000 people joined Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his wife Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali at the celebration of the Malaysia 2001 Christmas open house tonight.

The open house, held in the gardens of Istana Budaya here, was organised by the Culture, Arts and Tourism Ministry, and supported by the Malaysian Council of Churches.

Dr Mahathir, who arrived at 8.45pm, was greeted by Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Tan Sri Bernard Dompok, Anglican Church of West Malaysia Bishop Tan Sri Dr Lim Cheng Ean, Kuala Lumpur's new Datuk Bandar Datuk Mohamad Shaid Mohd Taufek and Culture, Arts and Tourism Ministry secretary-general Tengku Datuk Alaudin Tengku Abdul Majid.

Dr Mahathir later lit a Christmas tree, marking the start of the celebration and this was greeted by shouts of Malaysia Boleh and a Christmas song by carollers.

Visitors were entertained to performances by artistes Roy and Syafinaz, dancers from Istana Budaya and carollers from churches all around the country.

The Prime Minister also sang along to Roy's rendition of Tan Sri P. Ramlee's *Tunggu Sekejap*, a song specially dedicated to him.

Fourteen hotels took part in the celebration by providing food to guests, who thronged the gardens from as early as 6pm.

Among the guests were 150 media representatives from Thailand.

Some 200 orphans from around the Klang Valley who were invited to the function received their Christmas presents from the ministry.

Another open house will be hosted by the ministry in Ipoh on Feb 16, in celebration of the Chinese New Year festival.

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