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Hari Raya open house throughout nation

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - There was goodwill and joy in the air today as Malaysians celebrated Hari Raya Aidilfitri, ushering in the first day of Syawal.

Throughout the country, Muslims marked the end of the Ramadan fast with solat Aidilfitri prayers, open house and asking for forgiveness.

At Masjid Negara, Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Syed Putra Jamalullail and Raja Permaisuri Agong Tengku Fauziah were joined by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his wife Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Cabinet Ministers and ambassadors of Muslim nations in prayer.

Dr Mahathir and Dr Siti Hasmah then returned to Seri Perdana in Putrajaya to welcome guests. Thousands stood in line for a chance to convey their greetings.

Dr Mahathir said this year's celebrations had a more festive air. Political party leaders also called at Seri Perdana.

"We are happy to see different races celebrating together. It's a good tradition that can bring us closer to each other," said MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik.

MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said the Government had shown great concern for the people and spent a lot to bring festive cheer to the poorest.

In Arau, Perlis Regent Tuanku Syed Faizuddin Jamalullail and his grandmother Raja Perempuan Besar Tengku Budriah joined thousands of Muslims for prayers at the State mosque.

In Alor Star, Masjid Zahir was packed as Muslims congregated for prayers with the Sultan of Kedah and Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Syed Razak Syed Zain.

In Penang, celebrations began with Yang di-Pertua Negeri Tun Abdul Rahman Abbas performing prayers with more than 5,000 at Masjid Negeri.

Some 20,000 also joined him at Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Dr Hilmi Yahaya's open house in Balik Pulau.

In Ipoh, well-wishers streamed into the official residence of Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Tajol Rosli Ghazali after he had accompanied Sultan of Perak Sultan Azlan Shah, Raja Muda Perak Raja Nazrin Shah in their solat Aidilfitri at Masjid Ubudiah in Kuala Kangsar.

In Shah Alam, Sultan of Selangor, Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah, celebrated Hari Raya on a smaller scale after his recent bereavement, with about 6,000 turning up for his open house at Istana Bukit Kayangan.

In Kuala Pilah, Yang di-Pertuan Besar of Negri Sembilan Tuanku Ja'afar and the Tuanku Ampuan, Tuanku Najihah, attended solat Aidilfitri at the Masjid Diraja Tuanku Munawir before hosting an open house at Istana Besar Seri Menanti.

In Malacca, Yang di-Pertua Negeri Tun Syed Ahmad Shahabuddin and Chief Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam performed Aidilfitri prayers at the Al-Azim State mosque in Bukit Palah before hosting their own open house.

In Kota Baru, the Sultan of Kelantan, Tengku Mahkota and Tengku Bendahara joined thousands of Muslims in Hari Raya prayers at the Muhammadi Mosque and later received the rakyat at the nearby Istana Balai Besar. Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Aziz Nik Mat also held an open house, having led the Hari Raya prayers at the Kampung Pulau Melaka mosque near his home.

In Kuala Terengganu, Sultan Mizan Zainal Abidin performed his Hari Raya prayers with the rakyat at Al-Mukhtafi Billah Shah mosque and held an open house at Istana Maziah. Terengganu Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang who had accompanied the Sultan, held an open house at his residence.

In Kuantan, the Sultan of Pahang, Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob and the Tengku Mahkota joined some 5,000 Muslims for prayers at the State mosque. The open house by the royal family at the Sultan Abu Bakar palace saw some 10,000 visitors, while another 15,000 visited Adnan's official residence.

In Johor Baru, Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman and wife Datin Prof Dr Jamilah Ariffin played host to some 15,000 members of the public at Saujana.

In Kuching, thousands called on Yang di-Pertua Negeri Tun Abang Muhammad Salahuddin, Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud and other Muslim Ministers at their open house to celebrate Hari Raya.

In Kota Kinabalu, about 6,000 thronged the State mosque in Sembulan to pray, including Yang di-Pertua Negeri Tun Sakaran Dandai who later, with wife Toh Puan Rukaiyah Panglima Abdullah, held an open house at Istana Negeri.

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