

29/12/2002

Open houses prove integration alive and well

MALACCA, Sat. - The various national open houses this year have managed to allay suspicion among the various races and have helped promote national integration.

Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Paduka Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir said the five national open house events ending with tonight's national Christmas celebrations also proved that Malaysia is safe.

"In the past, Christmas was only seen as a religious celebration. Now, this national open house has portrayed the tolerance and strong relationship among the multi-ethnic, religious and cultural society that we have," he said.

This spirit shown by the people would help promote Malaysia as an attractive and safe tourist destination, the minister said at the National Christmas Day celebrations at the Hang Tuah Mall here tonight.

He also paid tribute to the thousands who attended the five national open house celebrations this year as they had shown their support to the Government and the integration of the various societies in Malaysia.

Kadir said next year's national open house celebrations would kick off with the Chinese New Year on Feb 8 in Petaling Jaya.

Meanwhile, Chief Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam said the people should be thankful to the Barisan Nasional Government and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for the success in maintaining the security and progress of the nation.

"We must be united in facing the threats to the country's stability," he said.

Ali urged the younger Malaysians to maintain the open house tradition.