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Deepavali (Roundup)

ALL COMMUNITIES JOIN IN DEEPAVALI MERRYMAKING

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 24 (Bernama) -- Malaysians of all races joined their fellow citizens of the Hindu faith in celebrating Deepavali, the festival of lights, reflecting their strong bond of unity and friendship.

Hindu households also held open house where delicious mutton curry with thosai and other Indian sweets were served to the visitors.

In PETALING JAYA, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and Minister of Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin visited the open house hosted by MIC Deputy President Datuk S.Subramaniam.

Also at Subramaniam's open house were MCA President Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting, Information Minister Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim and Health Minister Datuk Chua Jui Meng.

Umno Information Chief Tan Sri Megat Junid, Deputy Ministers, Parliamentary Secretaries and foreign diplomats were also present.

The Deputy Prime Minister and Subramaniam then jointly cut the Deepavali cake witnessed by Cabinet Ministers and some 1,000 people including foreign tourists.

Subramaniam then garlanded Abdullah and clothed him with the "Ponnadai" (golden robe) in line with the Indian tradition of honouring very high dignitaries.

Works Minister and MIC President Datuk Seri S.Samy Vellu is visiting Papua New Guinea with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Speaking to reporters, Subramaniam said the Indian community offered prayers so that Malaysia would continue to prosper and develop under the new leadership.

Dr Mahathir retires on Friday and Abdullah will succeed him as the fifth Prime Minister of Malaysia.

In MELAKA, Chief Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam was among state dignitaries who called at the open house hosted by State Executive Councillor and Melaka MIC Chief R.Raghavan at Taman Maju in Jasin.

In KEDAH, State MIC Chief and State Executive Councillor Datuk V.Saravanan held open house at his residence in Taman Ria, Sungai Petani.

Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Syed Razak Syed Zain is expected to visit the open house in the evening.

In KOTA KINABALU, Sabah Yang Dipertua Negeri Tun Ahmadshah Abdullah, Chief Minister Datuk Seri Musa Aman and State Barisan Nasional leaders called at the open house hosted by State MIC Chief V.Jothi at Dewan Maksak.

Speaking to reporters, Musa said Deepavali was one of the celebrations which provided an opportunity for the people to meet one another and strengthen friendship.

"You can see the close relationship between the BN leaders and the people in Sabah. Today it is our turn to visit the homes of Indians who are celebrating Deepavali," the Chief Minister said.

-- BERNAMA

MAN BH NT NM AAM