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Celebration

MALAYSIANS CELEBRATE NATIONAL DAY IN NEW YORK

By: Manik Mehta

NEW YORK, Sept 17 (Bernama) -- Together with diplomats from various countries accredited to the United Nations and the Malaysian community in and around New York, Malaysia's permanent representative to the United Nations, Datuk Rastam Mohamed Isa celebrated Malaysia's national day here Tuesday.

Rastam and his wife, Datin Norizan Sulaiman, hosted a reception at Malaysia's permanent mission located at the busy corner of New York City's second avenue and 43rd Street, close to the huge United Nations building.

The international gathering seemed to relish the Malaysian delicacies spread at the buffet table, as was confirmed by the long lines formed by the guests who were eager to sample the variety of food prepared for the occasion.

Members of the Malaysian community present at the mission felt that the occasion provided a good opportunity to meet and exchange notes with each other.

Simma Mare, a Malaysian who works for the United Nations, said that the reception was an "excellent opportunity" to meet many of his fellow countrymen under one roof.

It was difficult for him -- as it is for other Malaysians working for the United Nations -- to meet his countrymen because of pressure of work, commuting distance and other factors.

"Events such as these bring us together. I have been here for some four years and I must confess that it is not easy for me to meet other Malaysians frequently," he told Bernama.

Rastam was hosting his first National Day reception in New York.

Dressed in "Baju Melayu", he seemed to be at ease as he and the Malaysian consul-general in New York, Ahmad Shahizan Abdul Samad, together with their wives, greeted the invitees at the entrance and later, mingled with the guests.

The Malaysian ambassador to Berne, Switzerland, Datuk Ismail Mustapha, was also spotted at the event. He was in New York to attend the general assembly session.

Ismail is currently operating from a hotel in the Swiss capital until such time as permanent premises are established for the chancery.

Representatives of other Malaysian government offices in New York such as Mida, Matrade, Tourism Malaysia and Bank Negara Malaysia were also present at the reception.

Even as the guests mingled with each other and made small talk about the happenings in the Big Apple, the conversation would invariably turn to the forthcoming visit of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamed who will make his last appearance at the United Nations as Malaysia's Prime Minister.

Dr Mahathir is set to address the United Nations' general assembly on Sept 25 after which he will be talking to the press corps.

There is a lot of interest in the US, particularly among the industry, in developments taking place in Malaysia.

"Malaysia has matured as an interesting political player in the world arena. I am sure people here will be watching the developments taking place in this and next year," said one US businessman who has set up sourcing operations in Malaysia.

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