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Celebrating in true Malaysian style

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - Chinese New Year was celebrated in true Malaysian style yesterday with everyone taking part in the festivities.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said it has become a way of life for Malaysians.

"I am very happy with the situation and we should maintain the culture."

Abdullah said people from all walks of life attended the open house hosted by MCA and Gerakan during Chinese New Year and the situation was the same during Hari Raya Puasa and Deepavali.

"We see people from all racial backgrounds attend the various open house functions and not just those hosted by political parties. It is also the same when individuals host open house. People from all walks of life and races attend wherever an open house is held," he said.

Abdullah was speaking after attending the Gerakan open house at the Menara PGRM here yesterday.

Earlier, he attended an open house hosted by the MCA at Wisma MCA in Jalan Ampang.

With him were Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak and his wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor and ministers and their families.

True to Abdullah's observation, Malaysians ushered in the Year of the Rooster by making a beeline to the open house hosted by government leaders nationwide as well as visiting neighbours, friends and families.

Wisma MCA and Menara PGRM were the focal points in the city, with thousands of visitors attending both open house functions from as early as 9am.

Amidst the beating of drums and gongs and lion dances at the MCA open house, guests were treated to the special traditional Chinese dish of yee sang and other delicacies, including roti jala, putu mayam, satay and rojak.

Some 3,000 people attended the open house, which was hosted by MCA president Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting and wife Datin Seri Wendy Ong.

Others who were present included MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu and wife Datin Seri Indrani, Transport Minister Datuk Seri Chan Kong Choy, Human Resources Minister Datuk Dr Fong Chan Onn, and Health Minister Datuk Dr Chua Soi Lek.

They later spent about an hour at the Menara PGRM where Gerakan president and Energy, Water and Telecommunication Minister Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik hosted the open house. Guests were also entertained to traditional Chinese music.

Dr Lim also presented calligraphy art pieces to both Abdullah and Najib and distributed ang pows to orphans.

The arrival of former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Tun Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali added excitement to the celebration at both the open house functions.

Abdullah, in his message, also said festivities could be celebrated in many ways and not necessarily by lighting firecrackers.

"It is against the law and enforcement officers are doing their job by catching those who play firecrackers.

"Firecrackers are dangerous and it also disturbs the peace."

He said he was sad when he read that another boy had died due to injuries sustained from firecrackers.

Asked about his advice to those playing firecrackers, Abdullah said he

need not give any advice.

"It is against the law and they should know themselves.

"If they go against the law, they will have to face the consequences," he said.

In Ipoh, more than 5,000 people joined the Chinese New Year celebration held at the house of State MCA chairman Datuk Ong Ka Chuan yesterday.

Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Tajol Rosli Ghazali said he was happy to see people from all walks of life come to Ong's house.

Also present were Tajol Rosli's wife Datin Seri Kamariah Mokri and State Secretary Datuk Abdul Hanan Alang Endut.

Tajol Rosli later proceeded to State Urban and Local Government Committee chairman Datuk Chang Ko Youn's house in the afternoon.

He also attended the open house jointly hosted by Perak Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry and Perak Chinese Assembly Hall at Syuen Hotel yesterday.

In Kota Kinabalu, political parties and community leaders held Chinese New Year open house to usher in the year of the Rooster.

Sabah MCA leaders welcomed well-wishers to the party-organised open house in Sandakan and here, while Parti Bersatu Sabah hosted an open house at the Airport View Hotel yesterday.

Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Seri Musa Aman and other dignitaries attended the festivities.

Hotels and resorts also invited lion dance troupes and had staff dressed as the "God of Prosperity" to mark the start of the Lunar New Year.

In Kuala Terengganu, MCA division head Toh Chin Yaw hosted a Chinese New Year open house at his residence in Jalan Pusara here yesterday.

More than 4,000 guests, including State Secretary Datuk Muhatar Abdullah and Kuala Terengganu Umno division chief Datuk Wan Farid Wan Salleh, attended the event.

Guests had their fill of nasi dagang, satay and mee goreng.

The five-hour open house also included a lion dance performance by the Sekolah Menengah Chung Hwa Wei Sin dance troupe.

Toh, who is State Unity, Consumer Affairs and Environment Committee chairman, also presented ang pows and mandarin oranges to guests.

In Jertih, Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Idris Jusoh attended an open house organised by the Besut MCA division at Sekolah Rendah Kebangsaan Chung Hwa Wei Sin, yesterday. More than 1,000 turned up for the event.

(END) Source : New Straits Times