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Malaysian Hindu Sangam urges Indians to promote harmony

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - The Malaysian Hindu Sangam, in conjunction with Deepavali celebrations tomorrow, hopes that all Malaysians, regardless of race and religion, will maintain goodwill, peace and harmony in the country.

Its President, Datuk A. Vaithilingam, said Deepavali was a festival of lights which brought hope to all those who had experienced their share of hardship due to unsettled issues of turmoil in every part of the world.

"We in Malaysia have been more fortunate as a developing nation respected by all other nations," he said in a statement issued today.

Vaithilingam said Deepavali in Malaysia this year came at a time when the country's long-serving Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, was retiring in a week's time.

"All Malaysians shall always remember his services to the nation.

Hindus in Malaysia wish to express their appreciation for his contributions as the father of Modern Malaysia," he said.

The Malaysian Hindu Sangam also pledged to continue giving the same cooperation and support to Dr Mahathir's successor, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Wanita MIC chief Senator Jaya Partiban called on the Indian community to remain united and share the Deepavali celebration with the less fortunate and other races.

Jaya said that the Indians in Malaysia were very fortunate as they were able to live peacefully with the other races and enjoy continued economic development and progress.

"We must remain united as any split within the Indian community will have a negative impact on us. In celebrating Deepavali with our family members, we must also not forget the less fortunate people.

"Deepavali is a time to share our happiness and appreciation for the good life that we are enjoying. At the same time, let us create a muhibbah (goodwill) spirit among the other races and invite them to also participate in the festival of lights celebration," said Jaya in her Deepavali message.

Indian Progressive Front (IPF) president Datuk M.G. Pandithan said that this year's Deepavali celebration was a special one for the Indian community in Malaysia pending Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir's retirement on Oct 31.

Pandithan said that the Indians must follow and emulate Dr Mahathir in always placing the interest of the community and the country above anything else.

"All Malaysians must have the good qualities of Dr Mahathir who is known for his great contributions to the country."