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DEEPAVALI MESSAGE BY THE DEPUTY PRIME
MINISTER ON 22ND OCTOBER, 1965

Deepavali is a day of joy and happiness for all Hindus, the time of the year when they forget their past sufferings and to resolve to live a better life.

One of the outstanding characteristics of the Malaysian people is that we all enjoy and respect each other's festival days, no matter whether it be Hari Raya, or Christmas or Wesak Day or Deepavali or Chinese New Year. Whatever the occasion may be we all enjoy it together and as a result of this, our people of many racial origins have been able to live in harmony and happiness. It is well for all people, all Malaysians, to remember on this happy religious day of Deepavali the importance of mutual respect for one another's beliefs. This we have had for generations, and this is the spirit we should always have and strengthen in Malaysia.

We in Malaysia, people of many creeds, believe in God though each in his own way, and we are given complete freedom to do so, though the official religion of this country is Islam, and I am a devout Muslim myself. Not only is this freedom written in the Constitution, but the Alliance Government has gone a good deal further by providing places of worship and schools for non-Muslims and giving aid or Mission schools.

Let us all join together to make this Festival of Deepavali a day of joy and gladness. In doing so let us always remember that we must have respect for each other's religions, customs and ways of life. In the past we have never had any troubles arising from race or religion; and let all resolve to prevent such occurrences. I am very satisfied with the loyalty of Indians of Malaysian citizenship to this country and I hope they will continue together with citizens of other racial origins to serve our country.

To everyone on this joyful day, I send my warmest greetings, especially to faithful Hindus, for a happy Deepavali.