

Holiday for KL, Putrajaya thanks to MIC's efforts

NS - 21/1/2008

KUALA LUMPUR: Starting this year, Thaipusam will be an annual public holiday in the Federal Territories of Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi announced this yesterday to cheers and thunderous applause from thousands of Indians and Barisan Nasional supporters.

He said the decision was made after several calls were made by the MIC to have Thaipusam declared a public holiday in Kuala Lumpur.

"Yes, (Datuk Seri S.) Samy Vellu kept asking for Thaipusam to be made a public holiday, especially in Kuala Lumpur.

"Moreover, every year during Thaipusam, the roads in Kuala Lumpur become very congested," he said.

However, after the holiday, the people must continue to work hard, Abdullah said at a MIC-organised gathering yesterday.

Also present were Federal Territories Minister Datuk Seri Zul-

hasnan Rafique, Women, Family and Community Development Minister Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil and Deputy Home Affairs Minister Datuk Tan Chai Ho.

Thaipusam is currently a state holiday in Selangor, Penang, Perak, Negri Sembilan and Johor.

Thaipusam is also celebrated at the Sri Subramaniam Temple on the Cheroh mountain in Ipoh, Perak and in Jalan Waterfall in Penang.

Meanwhile, Malaysian Hindu Sangam president Datuk A. Vaithilingam welcomed Abdullah's statement.

He added that for more than 20 years, Hindus had been asking for this.

Vaithilingam also appealed to Kedah Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mahdzir Khalid and Malacca Chief Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam to gazette Thaipusam as a public holiday in their states as there was a large number of Hindus who visited Sungai Petani and Malacca to celebrate the festival.