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# PM, Rosmah join 1.6m at Batu Caves

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**THAIPUSAM:** Najib mingles with devotees

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**P**RIME Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak and wife Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor joined some 1.6 million Hindus and visitors gathered at Batu Caves here to celebrate Thaipusam yesterday.

Najib, who wore a cream Indian *kurta*, and Rosmah, dressed in pink and gold, arrived at the Sri Subramaniam Swamy Temple at 10.40am, where they were wel-

comed by MIC president Datuk Seri G. Palanivel and vice-president Datuk M. Saravanan.

The MIC leaders accompanied Najib and Rosmah on a walkabout at the temple grounds.

Najib mingled with the public and visited stalls selling food, jewellery and handmade crafts, before heading for the temple's main office, where he and Rosmah received welcome garlands and silk sashes.

Present was Malaysia's special envoy to India and former MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu.

Thousands of devotees, in colourful traditional clothes and accessories, climbed the 272 steps leading up to the cave temple, as part of the procession for Hindu deity Lord Murugan.

Some devotees carried elaborate *kavadi*, while others carried silver milk pots and offerings.

Young boys with shaved heads carried mini *kavadi*, accompanied by their families.

The celebration attracted locals and tourists, who snapped photographs of the vibrant atmosphere.

For devotee Xavier Vitalingam, 30, the pilgrimage up the temple steps was an annual obligation for him and his family.