

**Don't Brand Malaysians with Negative Elements - Ahmad Zahid**  
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HULU SELANGOR, Nov 19 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ahmad Zahid Hamidi said he does not want to see Malaysians being branded with negative elements.

For example, he said, before this triads were often labeled towards the Indians, Malays are synonymous with drugs while gambling is often linked to the Chinese community.

"We Malaysians must unite and set aside the negative elements to move forward," he said at the National Deepavali Open House 2016 in Batang Kali here, tonight.

Also present were Tourism Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz, Minister of Health who is also MIC president Datuk Seri Dr S. Subramaniam, Minister of Urban Wellbeing, Housing and Local Government Tan Sri Noh Omar, Deputy Minister of Education who is also Hulu Selangor Member of Parliament Datuk P. Kamalanathan and Selangor Umno Liaison Committee deputy chairman and Batang Kali assemblyman Datuk Mat Nadzari Ahmad Dahlan.

About 20,000 people attended the event organised by the Ministry of Tourism and aimed at enhancing mutual understanding and solidarity between people of various races in Malaysia as well as recognising local culture.

Ahmad Zahid said unlike other countries, Malaysia under the leadership of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, fully respect the various cultures and tradition among the various races.

"Although there are differences, we need to find a common solution and the differences can be overcome by understanding the various cultures, religions, traditions and races.

"The facets of unity and the understanding of culture among the various communities can be implanted through the various festivals celebrated, especially open house, that is normally attended by all races.

"Such understanding cannot be obtained through education or reading but the understanding will come from interaction among the various communities," he said.

The National level Deepavali Open house is among six major festive season events organised by the Tourism Ministry and feature various events like cultural dance, songs and sumptuous food spread.

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