

Joyous treat for 1,000 at Christmas open house



Merry mood: Choir members from churches in Penang singing Christmas carols at the Penang Christmas Open House in Penang Times Square.

GEORGE TOWN: The Penang Christmas Open House Celebration 2009 truly lived up to its 'Joy to the World' theme with more than 1,000 people thronging the Penang Times Square here to partake in the joyous celebration.

The event, held from 6.15pm to 10.30pm yesterday, was an evening of musical extravaganza and dance performances.

The crowd was treated to a sumptuous buffet while being entertained to the singing of carols and Christian music by choirs as well as dances by members from some churches and a group of dancers from Taiwan.

At the event, the Penang churches gave out donations totalling RM10,000 to five charitable organisations - St Nicholas Home, Kawan (Youth with a Mission), Asia Community Service, Sekolah Kanak-Kanak Terencat Akal and Puthiya Deebam.

In his speech, Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng said religious tourism that celebrated the traditional prayers of all the major religions in Penang could be promoted to highlight the religious harmony and cultural diversity in the state.

"May we pray for the blessings for the state of Penang to achieve its mission in becoming the best, brightest and most peaceful state in Malaysia," he said.

The celebration, which was graced by Yang di-Pertua Negri Tun Abdul Rahman Abbas, was jointly organised by the state government, Christian Federation of Malaysia and several other Christian organisations.

It was the third time it was held after 2006 and 2007 with the aim of instilling better understanding of Christianity and fostering goodwill among the communities.