



# '1 MALAYSIA' PONGGAL FESTIVAL PULLS OVER 1,000 SPECTATORS



Over 1,000 spectators filled up UMP Sports Complex to celebrate the "Sinar Ponggal" Festival on February 8, 2010. Among those cheering on were members of Kuantan Indian Association, Kuantan Bell Youth Club, students from institutions of higher learning such as Universiti Teknologi Petronas, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Universiti Teknikal Malaysia Melaka, Politeknik Sultan Haji Ahmad Shah and Kolej Institut Kemahiran Ikhtisas Pahang, students from surrounding schools as well as local Indian communities.

The festival - organized by the university's Arts & Culture Club, Indian Community Committee and the Department of Student Affairs & Alumni (JHEPA), with the cooperation of Kuantan Bell Youth Club - received overwhelming reception and saw the staging of various cultural performances, in line with the "1 Malaysia" concept launched by Prime Minister Dato' Sri Mohd Najib Tun Abdul Razak.

According to UMP Vice-Chancellor, Professor Dato' Dr Daing Mohd Nasir

Daing Ibrahim, who officiated the festival's opening in the presence of UMP Registrar, Mustafa Ibrahim and Pahang Bell Club Chairman, Thagaselan, organizing the university-level celebration was meaningful, not only to promote better understanding of the Indian festival, but also to appreciate the diverse ethnics in Malaysia, particularly in UMP.

The Vice-Chancellor was amazed by the high spirits shown by the students organizing the celebration and was further astounded to see the overwhelming response from external parties and local communities.

The Dean of JHEPA, Professor Dr Mohd Ridzuan Nordin, concurred that the first ever 1 Malaysia Ponggal Festival saw better-than-anticipated response. "The celebration of such festival will foster closer ties and promote improved understanding of the many cultures in the country."

Sharon Yong, a third-year student from the Faculty of Civil Engineering & Earth Resources said although she came from a different ethnic background, it did not