

PM pays visit for Chinese New Year celebrations

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Prime Minister Stephen Harper greets the crowd gathered at Aberdeen Centre Wednesday night during Chinese New Year celebrations. Joining him on stage was Richmond MP Alice Wong (left). Photo by Gord Goble/Special to the News

Prime Minister Stephen Harper paid a surprise visit to Aberdeen Centre late Wednesday evening to take part in Chinese New Year celebrations.

Harper greeted the jam-packed audience in central courtyard portion of the mall and took part in a traditional dotting of the eyes and tongue of a Chinese Lion, awakening it to greet the year of the sheep.

Also on hand was Richmond MP Alice Wong, Port Moody-Westwood-Port Coquitlam MP and Minister of Industry James Moore, and Richmond Centre MLA Teresa Watt.

Joey Kwan, the mall's spokeswoman said it took about a month of preparations to secure the PM's appearance as security officials from Ottawa paid visits to the bustling mall in the past few weeks.

Last year, federal Liberal leader Justin Trudeau was on hand for Chinese New Year celebrations. And in previous years, Premier Christy Clark was the surprise guest.

Chinese New Year events continue at Aberdeen Centre today (Friday) and into the weekend with live music and dance performances.