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4,000 turnout expected at Environment Run

Charlotte Venudran

JOHOR BARU, Fri. - A record 4,000 people are expected to take part in the Environment Run on Sunday.

The event, which is better known by its acronym 'E-Run', is being billed as the biggest mass participation event for the environment.

The run is unique in that it is not competitive but designed to enlist public commitment to efforts to protect the environment.

Each participant will contribute RM10 (for adults) and RM5 (children) in aid of 'green' projects in Johor Baru.

Proceeds would go towards the planting of trees throughout the city. Last year, the money was used to buy dustbins for distribution here.

The E-Run, an initiative of Puteri Pan Pacific Hotel, has the New Straits Times and Harian Metro as its official newspapers.

Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman was among several State leaders who had signed up for the 5km run.

Ghani, who was scheduled to flag off the run, however, will not be present as he is joining Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on his official visit to Cuba and Latin America.

Ghani will be represented by State Environment and Consumer Affairs Committee chairman Dr Chua Soi Lek.

The participants represent a wide cross-section of society with teams from factories, schools, government departments, non-governmental organisations, clubs and associations.

Many individuals and families have also signed for this worthy endeavour.

In view of the haze, the organisers have come up with contingency plans, including the distribution of face masks to all participants.

Disposable masks have been ordered and these would be given out along with T-Shirts, identification numbers, snack tickets and lucky draw coupons during registration on Sunday at 6.30am.

All participants are reminded to go to the hotel's carpark on Sunday even if the haze takes a turn for the worse, as several options have been worked out.

According to organising committee chairman Charlene Cheng, the E-Run will only be held as scheduled if the Air Pollutant Index is 50 or below.

"If the API level goes up to between 51 and 100, the event will be changed to an E-Walk. But should the API index exceed the 101 mark, we will call off all physical activity. Instead, there will only be a lucky draw opened to all participants," she said.

Those with respiratory problems are advised not to participate in any physical activity, but they are still welcome to show up to give moral support.

The hotel will make an announcement on the run, on Sunday morning after getting the latest API reading.

As a precautionary measure, a team of St John Ambulance officers will be on duty to attend to any emergencies.

The top prize in the lucky draw is a return air ticket for two to Jakarta with two nights' stay in a penthouse suite at the luxury Sari Pan Pacific Hotel.

There will also be special awards for the 'Most Environment-Friendly Company' and the 'Most Environment-Friendly School'. Prizes will also be given to the largest participating and best dressed team.

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