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Africa expedition set in motion

Patvinder Singh

SHAH ALAM, Fri. - Preparations for a gruelling 33-day 17,000 kilometre expedition across Africa were today set in motion by Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

The Silverstone TransAfrica 4X4 Expedition will see 16 teams travel from South Africa to Egypt on a mission to spread Malaysia's version of peace, goodwill and harmony.

The world's first large-scale Cape Town to Cairo journey under the patronage of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will also go through Botswana, Namibia, Zimbabwe, Zambia, Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia, Eritrea and Sudan.

Abdullah said the expedition was greeted with enthusiasm by the African countries and thanked their diplomats in Malaysia for their assistance in staging the trip.

The expedition will be flagged off by President Nelson Mandela of South Africa on Dec 1 this year and end on Jan 2 next year.

Jen (Rtd) Tan Sri Zain Hashim, director of sponsors Silverstone Berhad, said four of the 16 4X4 vehicles will be part of the parade commemorating Merdeka Day.

Zain said it was the first time a North-South African motor expedition was being held and said that an expedition exhibition on the 12 African nations, their people, culture, history, geography and flora and fauna was being staged at Silverstone's premises at Shah Alam.

The expedition's organising chairman, George Wong, said the members of the expedition were carefully chosen and were made up of businessmen, professionals and trades people.

"They will be trained to handle life on the road as well as perform their duties as unofficial ambassadors of Malaysia," Wong said.

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