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Firms urged to sponsor the arts

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KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - The private sector was today urged to play a bigger role towards the development of the arts through sponsorship.

Utusan Group executive director Tan Sri Kamarul Ariffin said today the financial resources of the corporate sector could best be utilised to further enhance activities involving the arts which he described as the determining factor in shaping the "nation's soul".

"The arts have been the least of our priorities in the quest towards a more economically advanced society and this has to change because a society's achievement would not be complete until it has attained a balance of both values."

Kamarul was speaking at the cheque presentation ceremony at the Utusan building by Nexus Golf Resort Karambunai and Kertam Holdings Berhad for their sponsorship of Taman Baginda, a children's musical theatre performance.

He added that the combined support from the private sector and the public was critical in ensuring that local arts presentations could compete with their foreign counterparts.

"We must in the process, place our trust in the local artistes' capabilities because we cannot rely forever on being fed and influenced by entertainment imported from abroad."

Kamarul when commending the two companies for their RM200,000 sponsorship of the play, described such efforts as "far sighted and exemplary".

Nexus Golf Resort Karambunai, a subsidiary of FACB Berhad was represented at the ceremony by its director Datuk Nik Kamaruddin Ismail while Kertam Berhad was represented by its business development manager Muhibah Ardani.

Also present were New Straits Times assistant group editor Ahmad A. Talib, Utusan Group chief editor Datuk Johan Jaaffar and several personnel from both sponsoring companies.

The play, participated by over 50 children of all ages, is organised by the New Straits Times and Utusan Malaysia and is scheduled to be held from Dec 12 to 17 at the Malaysian Tourist Information Centre.

It aims to inculcate creativity among youths and to provide a healthy alternative in spending their spare time.

The comedy which revolves around the daily life of an imaginative child who was a victim of her parents' separation, touches on issues such as the ringgit's depreciation, poison pen letters, environmental preservation, child abuse, AIDS and the haze problem.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad who has agreed to be the patron of the play is scheduled to attend one of the performances on an undisclosed date.

Those seeking further information may call MATIC or Utusan Malaysia at 03-2648337 and 03-2217055 respectively.

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