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A touch of Dr M at Bangsar Carnival

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DATUK Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad may be no Picasso. Still, the Prime Minister will get to put the finishing touches to a painting by Tajuddin Ismail at Art Salon in Bangsar Baru, Kuala Lumpur tonight to cap the Bangsar Carnival.

Art Salon co-owner Spencer Wing, who is also a member of the Bangsar Baru Business Council (BBBC), said the painting, entitled Malaysia Boleh, will be sold immediately after Dr Mahathir's "artistic intervention", and the proceeds will be donated to Sukom, organiser of the 16th Commonwealth Games to be held here on Sept 11-21.

A cheque-presentation will be made after Dr Mahathir ends his "walkabout" of shops and hawker stalls there with a dinner at Chinoz, one of the elegant eateries and chic cafes in the affluent neighbourhood.

Tajuddin, a 48-year-old lecturer with Institut Teknologi Mara, is noted for his contemplative works with sombre hues and trademark ribbons and crosses.

To mark Dr Mahathir's visit, there will be a fiesta of street musicians and cultural performances where adjacent roads within the square will be turned into a pedestrian mall.

The celebration will start at 6pm and will be launched at 9pm by Dr Mahathir. It is to mark Malaysia's hosting of the Games and to boost ticket sales for the event.

It is also to promote Bangsar Baru as a destination for Games participants.

Dr Mahathir's itinerary for the evening includes a "pit-stop" at the Sukom ticketing counter and a Games cake-cutting ceremony.

He will be accompanied by Youth and Sports Ministry parliamentary secretary Datuk Shahrizat Abdul Jalil, who is also Lembah Pantai Member of Parliament, and BBBC president Ronald Quay.

The last major "collaboration" between politicians and painters was at the Malam Karyawan concert staged for the benefit of war-torn Bosnia in September 1994. Then, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim put his "golden" signature to the works of the artists performing on stage.

The New Straits Times Press Bhd bought two of the paintings, by Bayu Utomo Radjikin and Australia-based Eric Quah, and they can be viewed at its Balai Berita foyer.

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