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Culture comes alive

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FROM tomorrow till Sept 26, the rich and diverse culture of Malaysia will come alive in a celebration of dance, handicraft, food and music.

Drumbeats will accompany the strains of sweet voices as the aroma of exotic cuisine will tempt the hungry at dozens of hotels and shopping malls in Kuala Lumpur, Petaling Jaya and Shah Alam.

The annual tourism programme called Malaysia Fest or Pesta Malaysia, which starts from the second Saturday of September every year, has successfully increased tourism activity and provided a microcosmic opportunity for foreign tourists to have a quick taste and tour of Malaysia. Not to mention it is heaven-sent for ardent photographers.

As usual, every State will be represented and shopping malls like Sungei Wang Plaza will have a Terengganu Culture and Heritage promotion while Suria KLCC will feature Kelantan Culture and Heritage. KL Tower will have a Pahang Cultural and Handicraft promotion while Central Market will have a Kedah Panorama Exhibition.

Sabah and Sarawak have not been left out and PWTC will feature a Sarawak Food and Culture Fest while Sabahan Splendour will take centre stage at Endah Parade Mall in Sri Petaling.

The Malaysia Fest's opening ceremony will be held on Sunday and doing the honours will be Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The opening ceremony coincides with the launch of the Merdeka Square Festival and it will feature exotic dances, traditional music, the beating of kompang (hand drums) and rebana ubi (giant drums from Kelantan).

Adding variety to this Sunday's performance will be artistes from Commonwealth countries.

This year's Malaysia Fest is extra special because it coincides with the XVI Commonwealth Games, which will be on from today till Sept 21.

Tens of thousands of tourists, sports fans, athletes, officials and their families will have the chance to have a quick experience of what multi-racial Malaysia has to offer in terms of culture, food, dance and music.

In the meantime, the Commonwealth Cultural Festival, a year-long series of events organised by the Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism, is ongoing.

Among the events is the Merdeka Square Cultural Festival which runs from tomorrow till Sept 20 during which cultural troupes from Commonwealth countries will present traditional and modern music, songs and dances at Merdeka Square, Central Market, Petaling Street and Lebuhr Pasar.

Another event is the Commonwealth of Art: Traditions, Imagination and Independent Nations Exhibition at the National Art Gallery which will have works by artists from 20 countries on display till Oct 31.

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