

06/07/1998

Pahang float bags Premier Trophy

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PAHANG yesterday won the 1998 Floral Parade's Premier Trophy with its entry which resembles a traditional "congak" game set.

The float, by the Fraser's Hill Development Corporation, showcased some of the State's popular pastimes like top-spinning and the "congak".

The concept highlighted the importance of preserving arts and customs despite the drastic changes the country has undergone in pursuing high technological development.

The Kuala Lumpur City Hall's float themed "Towards The Next Millennium" won the Theme Trophy for depicting the national aspirations towards industrialisation and globalisation of the digital economy through the Multimedia Super Corridor.

The Penang float depicting a "boxing match" between an Orang Utan and a lion carrying the theme "Pulau Pinang Boleh" won the Creative Trophy for excellent animation.

The Parade's Special Trophy went to Malaysia Airlines while the Shah Alam Municipal Council's float won the Jury's Special Trophy.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who earlier launched the parade in conjunction with the Floral Fest '98 from July 5 to 12, later gave away the prizes.

Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Sabbaruddin Chik expressed satisfaction with the participation to this year's floral parade, which saw 10 floats compared with six last year.

Asked to justify the staging of the event in the current economic situation, he said the floral parade is a good attraction for tourists and that tourism is one of the revenue-generating activities for the country.

This year, tourist arrivals are expected to reach 6.8 million while tourism receipts are targeted at RM12.8 billion.

Some 3,000 people, locals and foreigners alike, lined up along the Sultan Abdul Samad Building fronting the Dataran Merdeka to witness the annual event.

The floral parade themed "Games and Pastimes" is the highlight of the annual Flora Fest. Accompanying the floats were 18 bands from all over the country.

Pahang Culture, Arts and Tourism Committee chairman Datuk Shahiruddin Moin said the win came as a surprise to the State Government.

"We have participated in seven parades and we nearly gave up this time. We took about one month to build the float and we engaged a local consultant to help us," he said. This year, Pahang's float costs only RM120,000 to build unlike the previous floats which averaged RM300,000.

This year marked the eighth year of the Flora Fest, which will be celebrated with week-long activities such as a florathon, band performances, a photography competition and exhibition, fruit sales, a flori-culture exhibition, an orchid exhibition and competition, a children's musical, a flora hunt, a flora jazz festival and the Selangor mini-florade.

Besides Pahang, Penang, Kuala Lumpur City Hall, Malaysia Airlines and the Shah Alam Municipal Council, others which took part are the Kuala Lumpur Tourism Association, Johor Government, Tourism Malaysia and Pempena Sdn Bhd, Negri Sembilan Government and KFC Holdings.

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