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Colours of Malaysia to replace Fest

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KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - The Malaysia Fest, deemed too Klang-Valley based to attract foreign tourists, will make way next year for the national-level Colours of Malaysia month.

Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir said the 12-year-old fest had given priority to the Klang Valley at the expense of other States.

"This resulted in other States being neglected during the festival," he told a Press conference on the Colours of Malaysia Parade to be held this Saturday.

The parade will mark the launching of the Colours of Malaysia Month. The Malaysia Fest was held between Sept 11 and 25 this year.

The three-hour parade will be launched by the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah in front of the Sultan Abdul Samad building here.

Over 4,000 people from all over the country have confirmed participation in what Abdul Kadir described as the "largest cultural parade ever held in the country".

Each State, he said, would send a contingent of at least 100 people and showcase their culture, including Dondang Sayang (Malacca), Dikir Barat (Kelantan), 'Kuda Kepang' dance (Johor) and a Chingay performance (Penang).

There would also be cultural performances of ethnic groups in the country, including the Thai, Chetty and the Baba/Nyonya communities.

The parade would start about 8.30pm at Jalan Isfahan in front of the Sogo shopping complex and proceed to Jalan Raja Laut, Jalan Leboh Pasar, Jalan Persekutuan and end in front of the Sessions Court.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and several Cabinet Ministers are also expected to watch the parade, which is also held in conjunction with the installation of the 11th Yang di-Pertuan Agong.

"The parade marks the launch of the Colours of Malaysia Month where every State will organise activities to promote tourism," he said, adding that all hotels in the country have been told to publicise the event.

He added his Ministry has also invited foreign journalists covering the Formula 1 Grand Prix at the Sepang International Circuit this weekend to attend the parade.

Abdul Kadir said beginning next year, all tourism activities throughout the country would also be standardised to ensure better co-ordination of tourism promotion.

A committee comprising executive councillors in charge of tourism from each State has been formed to look into the matter.

The programmes to be standardised are the Shopping Carnival, Water Fest, Fruit Festival, and this event.

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