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Race gives rise to a host of exciting activities

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Exciting activities have been planned to commemorate the inaugural Petronas Malaysian F1 Grand Prix later this month.

The Sepang International Circuit, the managers of race venue, together with various governmental and private sector organisations have lined up several motorsports-related activities during the week-long Malaysian Motorsports Week.

In a tentative list released to the New Straits Times today, it was revealed that the event would involve the activities around various spots in the Klang Valley as well as the race circuit in Sepang.

The official opening of the Malaysian Motorsports Week will be held on Oct 9 at Dataran Merdeka, when Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will officiate at the launch.

The event, organised by the Tourism Promotion Board, Youth and Sports Ministry, SIC, Rainbird (M) Sdn Bhd and Petronas, will feature a motorcade from the KLCC to Dataran Merdeka, followed by a live performance at the latter venue.

The first of the major events is the International Motorsports and Vintage Cars show and exhibition between Oct 2 and 24 which was opened last week by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

On Oct 10, the Sepang 4 X 4 Adventure Challenge will be held at the Sepang track, with Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Abu Hassan Omar expected to launch the event.

This will be followed by the Sepang Go-Kart championship at the SIC Go-Kart track between Oct 10 and 13 which will be officiated by Youth and Sports Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin and Malaysia Airports chairman Tan Sri Basir Ismail.

The organisers are working to get Ferrari F1 stars Eddie Irvine, Micheal Schumacher and Mika Salo to participate.

During the same period, the team Stewart-Ford grand prix drivers Johnny Herbert and Rubens Barrichello - fresh from their first and second place podium finishes at the recent European Grand Prix - will meet their fans at the Shah Alam Go-Kart circuit on Oct 14.

The Malaysian grand prix will not be all about motorsports alone. To celebrate the success of the first ever F1 race in the country, a street party has been planned by the SIC at the Bangsar and Jalan P. Ramlee areas.

While there has yet to be any confirmation on the event, the SIC said it was planning the party in Bangsar with Lembah Pantai MP and Youth and Sports parliamentary secretary Datuk Shahrizat Abdul Jalil.

If it materialises, expect Bangsar to be ablaze again with colour and excitement after several similar events were organised early this year and late last year.

A grand prix concert has also been planned at the Shah Alam Stadium on Oct 15 or 17, although no details on the event were available.

The military is also expected to be involved in the celebrations with the hosting of the tattoo at the National Stadium at Bukit Jalil between Oct 15 and 17.

The events list from the SIC also noted the media activities prior to the race. Accreditation registration for the race will be opened on Oct 13 and 14 at the Pan Pacific Hotel KLIA before the official opening of the media centre at the circuit.

The Grand Prix is believed to be the third largest sporting event in the world after the Olympics and the football World Cup.

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