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Get ready for shopping carnival

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - The Malaysia Mega Sale Shopping Carnival is just round the corner and is expected to offer shoppers better bargains as the event will coincide with the festive seasons.

Beginning Dec 2, more retailers, shopping complexes and hotels will be taking part in the month-long shopping carnival compared with the previous one in August participated by 800 retailers.

Participants have put in more effort this time as most of them have budgeted for the end-of-year season, back-to-school sale, Christmas, Hari Raya and Chinese New Year celebrations.

Shopping complexes have already begun putting up decorations while hotels have been advertising their season's rates.

The excitement of the carnival has definitely caught on, so much so that some retailers and hoteliers want it to be extended until Jan 21, which is just after Chinese New Year.

The carnival will be launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in Kuala Lumpur on Dec 2 while his deputy Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi will be doing the honours in Langkawi.

Finance Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin has been invited to launch the carnival in Malacca.

As the carnival coincides with the fasting month, about 2,000 orphans have been invited to break fast with the dignitaries after the launch here.

The annual carnival, aimed at promoting Malaysia as a shopping haven, is held three times a year - in March, August and December.

During the last carnival, 1.9 million shoppers had visited the country between Aug 5 and Sept 5 through the southern entry point.

This number was much higher than the average of between 700,000 and 800,000 people. Many of them were day-trippers who simply wanted to take advantage of the nation's big sale.

A permanent secretariat has been set up to look into the preparations for every Mega Sale Shopping Carnival.

Some retailers who participated in the last carnival had complained of being made to hold three sales a year.

Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir had met with them and explained that their participation was essential if Malaysia wanted to promote herself as a shopping destination like Dubai and Singapore.

The meeting agreed that all retailers had to participate in the carnival in August as it would be considered the "mother of all sales", while the events in March and December were not compulsory.

However, Abdul Kadir had stressed that it would be best if retailers participated in all three events.

He said Malaysia was lagging behind other countries which had advertised themselves as a shopper's paradise.

A website www.Malaysiamegasale.com has been set up for those interested in the carnival.

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