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Hari Raya national celebrations to be in JB

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - The national-level celebration for Hari Raya this year will be held in Johor Baru to woo tourists from Singapore.

Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir said today the move was timely as Singapore had been an avid supporter of Malaysia's tourism industry.

"We are working at getting the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Salahuddin Abdul Aziz Shah or the acting Yang Di-Pertuan Agong Sultan Mizan Zainal Abidin Shah to grace the occasion.

"Elsewhere, plans are afoot to stage next year's national-level celebration for the Chinese New Year in the Kinta Valley in Perak," he told a Press conference at the Federal Government's Deepavali 2001 open house in Istana Budaya in Jalan Tun Razak.

Also present were Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Abdul Kadir's deputy, Datuk Dr Ng Yen Yen, Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Deputy Minister Datuk S. Subramaniam and Housing and Local Government Deputy Minister Datuk M. Kayveas.

Abdul Kadir said this year's open house for Christmas was likely to be held in the Federal capital.

"However, we are still discussing the venue with non-governmental organisations."

The Cabinet had agreed in December last year that the six major festivals in Malaysia would be celebrated nationally with a view to promoting solidarity among the people and tourism.

They are Hari Raya Puasa, Chinese New Year, Deepavali, Christmas, the Sarawak Gawai Festival and the Pesta Keamatan (Sabah Harvest Festival).

The inaugural "Rumah Terbuka Malaysia 2001" was held at Istana Budaya on Jan 7 this year to celebrate Hari Raya.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir, who opened the Deepavali 2001 open house, was given the honour of cutting Malaysia's longest tosai, which measured three metres.

A group of 40 Russian tour agents and media representatives also took the opportunity to greet Dr Mahathir with a banner that read "We Love Malaysia".

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