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Preparations for grand bash well under way

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - Preparations to usher in 2002 in Dataran Merdeka are well under way and the excitement can be felt by everyone including volunteers taking part in the programme.

Stages and tents were put up at the Dataran Merdeka today for the grand celebrations to welcome the New Year and to celebrate Hari Raya and Christmas tomorrow.

Themed Pancawarna Malaysia - Malaysians' Open House - it is expected to attract about 100,000 people.

Preparations for the event began last night.

Assistant show director Eddynor Ali is confident that the event will be well-received.

There will be 29 artistes and nine groups performing, including Nora, Rabbani, Datuk M. Daud Kilau, Brothers and Koprata, apart from cultural groups.

Food and drinks will be served from 3pm to 6pm. Performances will begin at 3pm and continue until 1.30am.

The VIPs are expected to arrive at 8pm.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is scheduled to arrive at 11.35pm.

As is the tradition, there will be a fireworks display and giant balloons are to be released to mark the beginning of the New Year.

"All this time, it has been our leaders who have been hosting open house for the rakyat. This is our chance to show our appreciation to them by having this grand-scale event," organising committee secretary Tengku Shaifful Bahri Tengku Zainal Abidin said.

He said the organisers had enlisted the help of about 500 volunteers from non-governmental organisations.

"About 80 per cent of the work was completed today. Tomorrow, we will be preparing food and drinks for the 100,000 people expected to attend," he added.

Tengku Shaifful Bahri said it took a crew of 79 to put the whole event together.

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