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Readying for Pata bash on Sunday

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KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - The Pacific-Asia Travel Association (Pata 2001) conference-cum-exhibition is creating a spirit of festivity with last minute touches for its 50th anniversary launch at the Putra World Trade Centre on Sunday.

The 1,800 delegates from 70 member countries have started arriving to participate in symposiums and various programmes organised by the host country.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is expected to open the conference on Monday.

The five-day Pata 2001 will draw participants from tourism and tourism-related fields such as airlines, shipping lines, tour operators and travel agents.

In fact, the conference is an excellent venue for foreign and local delegates to establish networking ties.

With Malaysia hosting the 50th anniversary event, Kuala Lumpur is turning into a glittering city with colourful lights. Flowering plants, posters and banners are placed at strategic points and locations.

Kuala Lumpur City Hall has been working round the clock since last Sunday to beautify and light up the city for the occasion, which is much looked forward to by the organisers, participants and Malaysians.

Its Organisation Management Department (public affairs) deputy director Sariffuddin Ibrahim said preparations for the conference started early this month with more than 1,000 personnel deployed to undertake beautification efforts.

He said they not only had to beautify the city but also prepare for the welcome ceremony at Esplanade, Kuala Lumpur City Centre on Sunday and conference at PWTC on Monday.

It is learnt that City Hall had allocated RM200,000 to beautify the city for the conference. Pata 2001 will be the third Pata conference to be hosted by Malaysia after 1972 and 1986.

A one-day symposium will be held in conjunction with the conference.

The symposium is one of the event's key programmes. Its theme will be "Conservation - our key to the future."

The symposium will remind members of their role in maintaining sustainable growth within the industry.

Capitalising on the presence of key personalities in the Asia-Pacific tourism trade during the event, Tourism Malaysia will be showcasing all the attractions and attributes of the country.

It will also promote Malaysia as a premier tourist destination in the region.

Delegates will be given the choice to take several complementary tours such as KL Heritage trail, KL Garden City charms, Malaysian fashion extravaganza and Putrajaya: Inspiring City of the Future.

Complimentary sports programmes include the 50th Pata Anniversary Golf Challenge and the 50th Pata Bowling Tournament. The attraction in the sports programme is the prize for the hole-in-one golf winner - a vintage TD2000 Roadster worth RM180,000.

Several post-conference tours have also been arranged for the delegates.

This include tours to Penang, Langkawi, Pulau Redang (in Terengganu), Sabah, Sarawak; Taman Negara and Genting Highlands (Pahang); Pulau Pangkor and Gua Tempurung (Perak); Shah Alam, Port Dickson, Malacca and Johor

Baru.