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Gawai-Sarawak

SIBU TO HOST NATIONAL GAWAI DAYAK OPEN HOUSE ON JUNE 14

SIBU, April 7 (Bernama) -- The national level Gawai Dayak Open House will be held at the Sibu Town Square on June 14.

Sarawak Assistant Minister of Tourism Peter Nyarok anak Entri said today Their Majesties would be invited to grace the occasion, one of the 15 main activities under the Sarawak Tourism Year 2003 programme.

The Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali are also expected to be present.

More than 100,000 people including foreign guests are likely to join in the celebrations.

Speaking to reporters after chairing the working committee meeting, Nyarok said this was the second time that the event would be held on a national scale after the inaugural one in Kuching last year.

He said it was being jointly organised by the Federal Ministry of Culture, Arts and Tourism and the state ministries of Tourism and Social Development and Urbanization.

"Through this event, we hope to showcase the uniqueness of the gawai celebrations, the colourful Dayak Community and Sarawak's beauty to the outside world."

"At the same time we also hope to display the strong bond unity and solidarity that bind multi-racial Malaysians," Nyarok said.

He said State Minister of Social Development and Urbanization Datuk Seri Dr James Jemut Masing was the Chairman of the Main Organising Committee.

He said the Yang di-Pertuan Agong and Raja Permaisuri Agong would be given a traditional Dayak welcome on arrival at the venue. They would then be invited to the open house of the Iban, Bidayuh and Orang Ulu, three of the main Dayak groups.

There will be Dayak cultural dances, performances by invited artistes, firework displays and dinners.

Fifty foreign television stations and about 100 journalists are expected to cover the function.

When asked whether the current SARS (Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome) situation would affect the celebrations, Nyarok said it would have minimal impact.

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