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F1 fans, get ready to party!

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THE Kuala Lumpur Grand Prix City programme featuring a series of motorsports activities around the city to lead up to the F1 race, will be held from March 7 to 21.

Organised by Kuala Lumpur City Hall in collaboration with Sepang International Circuit and other major sponsors, the Kuala Lumpur Grand Prix City's (KLGPC) logo was launched recently by Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Paduka Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir at The Shook Restaurant, Starhill Shopping Centre.

Present were Kuala Lumpur Datuk Bandar Datuk Mohamad Shaid Mohd Taufek, Sepang International Circuit chairman Datuk Mokhzani Mahathir and YTL Corporation managing director Tan Sri Francis Yeoh.

Popular singer Ning Baizura, who is also Malaysia's F1 ambassadress, made an appearance during the unveiling of a Waja 1.8 for the Celcom/SMS contest, which will run next month.

The KLGPC activities include a Grand Prix weekend festival from March 19 to 21 and street parties. Celebration zones will be designated in Bukit Bintang, Changkat Bukit Bintang, Bangsar and Jalan P. Ramlee.

The KLGPC weekend festival will kick off on March 19 at Bukit Bintang. Among the events are contemporary and cultural performances as well as games, sale of motorsports merchandise and display of racing cars.

The highlight will be the launch of the "KL Night" programme where for three nights, 100 powerful searchlights beaming 1.6km up the sky will transform the city's skyline. Twenty buildings in the city centre will also be lit in rainbow colours to enhance the party mood.

On March 20, the celebration zones in areas such as Bukit Bintang, Jalan P. Ramlee and Menara Kuala Lumpur will offer live concerts featuring local and foreign entertainers. There will also be exciting prizes and giveaways as well as a pyrotechnics and fireworks display.

The F1 Celebration Party after the race will honour winners of the 2004 Malaysian F1 race, the sixth edition of the Formula One Petronas Malaysian Grand Prix.

Malaysia will host Round 2 of the 2004 Formula One World Championship, which will run in 18 legs around the globe, starting with the Australian Grand Prix in Melbourne on March 7. The championship closes with the Grand Prix of Brazil in October.

Racing fans can catch the season-opening of the Australian Grand Prix live at Dataran Merdeka on March 7 as City Hall will screen the race at the square's giant screen as part of the KL Grand Prix City programme.

The following weekend on March 13, fans are again invited to Dataran Merdeka in their Grand Prix favourite team colours to spice up the weekend with special activities.

It will also be the venue for the Classic and Vintage Car concourse display where more than 50 vehicles are expected to be on show.

The same day, racing fans can get a preview of the action of the Sepang races with a street demonstration starting at Dataran Merdeka which will see the Formula Hayabusha and Porsche Carrera GT 3 machines blazing through the streets of Kuala Lumpur.

As in last year's race, the Formula One Petronas Malaysian Grand Prix will have the Formula One Malaysia, which runs on the 1300cc Hayabusha engines, and Porsche Carrera GT3 championship as support races.

Concluding the revving on March 13 will be the Bangsar F1 Street Party,

where the entire stretch of Telawi 3 in Bangsar will be painted with F1 colours with special programmes being organised to light up the night.

Winners of the Classic and Vintage Car concourse display will go on parade from Dataran Merdeka to the venue of the street party, which will have Ning as the star attraction.