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Crowning a truly auspicious occasion

Annie Freeda Cruetz

IN accordance with Article 1 Clause IX (A) Part One of the Selangor Constitution 1959 - the Sultan must be crowned in accordance with the State adat istiadat within four years from the date of being proclaimed the Sultan.

His Royal Highness Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah will officially be crowned as the ninth Sultan of Selangor today. He succeeds his father, the late Sultan Salahuddin Aziz Shah, who passed away on Nov 21, 2001.

In view of this compulsive law, Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Dr Mohd Khir Toyo said the coronation ceremony will be held today.

"The crowning is an auspicious and memorable occasion and that is why the State Government gives importance to it and organised a month-long celebration involving the rakyat," he said.

The State Government has made it compulsory that the State flag be hoisted at all public and private buildings in Selangor from March 5-31 to commemorate the occasion.

Banners and billboards have also been put up at strategic locations in all local councils to denote the coronation ceremony.

Dr Mohd Khir said the Selangor Islamic religious department has also been directed to prepare the special Khutbah text in conjunction with the coronation ceremony for all mosques in the State.

Twenty-four official programmes have been lined-up with highlights being the istiadat letak kerja (March 6), istiadat bersiram tabal or the bathing ceremony (March 7), royal banquet (March 9) and investiture ceremony (March 17), all to be held at Istana Alam Shah in Klang.

Apart from the royal town of Klang being spruced up and turned into a fairy land at night with beautiful decorations and colour lightings adorning the streets and commercial centres, Dr Mohd Khir said: "All local councils will be organising their own activities and programmes in conjunction with the coronation ceremony until end of this month."

The programmes, he added, were more family and youth-oriented.

"The Sultan wants the rakyat to take part in the celebration. That is why all the programmes are people-oriented activities where even children can participate with their elders," he added.

The Sultan is expected to go to the ground and meet the thousands of well-wishers during the hi-tea parties to be held for the rakyat, youths and the less fortunate in Istana Alam Shah.

Almost 10,000 rakyat from all walks of life, are expected to attend the hi-tea scheduled for March 16, March 18 and March 28.

Dr Mohd Khir said the monarch wants people of all ethnic groups, religion and race to attend the hi-tea and other programmes.

Highlighting some of the events, Dr Mohd Khir said, parents should take time off from their busy schedules to visit the Sultan Alam Shah museum with their children to see the exhibition on the history of the Selangor Sultanate.

"The exhibition will be open to public till end of the month," he said.

The other interesting events are the 'Sukan X-Treme' at X-Treme Sport Arena in Petaling Jaya, traditional and integration sports in all districts, and Sports Day Launch (larian 17K in Shah Alam) - starting 7.30am on March 10.

Water Fair or Pesta Air is expected to attract thousands of people, especially youth and children to Tanjung Harapan in Port Klang on March

15.

The art exhibition at Galeri Shah Alam, starting March 18, is another interesting event for art lovers.

What is in store for the people of Selangor is the Concert Rakyat in Stadium Shah Alam on March 22 at 8.15pm, Citra Budaya performance at Dataran Shah Alam on March 24 at 9pm, football Selangor vs Singapore (Sultan of Selangor Cup) at Stadium Shah Alam on March 29 at 8.30pm - all free.

Dr Mohd Khir said some 80,000 people are expected to attend the concert Rakyat and the football match.

Another highlight where the people can come and be entertained is at the "Persembahan orkestra menjunjung kasih" at Auditorium MBSA.

Public can view the orchestra via the electronic billboard displayed at Dataran Shah Alam.

As for the ceremony today, Dr Mohd Khir said, invitations were sent to all Sultans, including Sultan of Brunei, and Yang Di-Pertuas besides to Cabinet Ministers, High Commissioners and ambassadors and VIPs.

"We have arranged with Concorde Hotel and Grand BlueWave hotel for the royalties to stay, starting March 7. The hotels will also accommodate other invited dignitaries so that they can attend the coronation ceremony," he added.

The royalties together with the invited guests, including Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and his Cabinet ministers are expected to attend the Royal Banquet on March 9.

March 10 is a public holiday for Selangor.

Dr Mohd Khir said the State Government will also be giving away souvenirs such as key chains and pencil boxes to schoolchildren besides souvenirs commemorating the occasion to invited guests.

Pos Malaysia is also issuing a set of three stamps measuring 30mm by 40mm. They are:

- * 30 sen - a portrait of His Royal Highness wearing the Selangor State headgear,

- * 50 sen - a portrait of the Sultan as the country's Navy chief and

- * RM1 - a portrait of the Sultan wearing the coronation crown.

All three stamps bear the legend kemahkotaan DYMM Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah/Sultan Selangor Ke-9.