

**Kuala Lumpur To Host First Asean Cultural Festival - Rais
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By Ahmad Fuad Yahya**

SEMARANG (Indonesia), Oct 10 (Bernama) -- Kuala Lumpur will host the first Asean Cultural Festival next year, a programme which Information Communication and Culture Minister Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim said would serve as one of the initiatives to build a One Asean community.

Rais said Malaysia's proposal for the festival's venue to be rotated among Asean countries was well received by members.

"We have requested that this is to be included in the seasonal framework of the Asean members countries.

"We will also emphasise programmes like cultural exchange among youths and a film festival which will be held in Bali, prior to the Asean Summit (in the resort island) next month," he told Bernama after attending the sixth meeting of the Asean Socio-Cultural Community (ASCC) Council here Monday.

Rais said the Asean Cultural Festival would give an identity to Asean in the bid to achieve the Asean Community in 2015.

He said the ministry would send a letter to Asean member countries to seek inputs or suggestion for programmes for the festival, which would involve the participation of youths.

Dr Rais said Malaysia also recommended that the festival be held once a year and that member countries would only need to commit to send their respective cultural troupes.

"We in Kuala Lumpur will find ways how this programme could be jointly held under the concept of Asean friendship," he said.

At today's meeting, Malaysia raised the need to balance cultural and non-cultural matters, such as issues concerning migrant workers, and that discussions on these matters should be made among the ministers concerned and not in forums such as the ASCC.

Rais said Malaysia also raised issues concerning the need for a guideline or blueprint on cultural matters to be observed by Asean members.

He said Malaysia would also submit to the Asean Secretariat a proposal for an Asean creative industry so that films, visual arts and aspects concerning tradition and heritage could represent the spirit of Asean solidarity.

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