

ASEAN Spouses Programme Combination Of Three Elements

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From M. Saraswathi

MANILA, Nov 18 (Bernama) - The spouses programme of the 27th ASEAN Summit with its theme "A Tapestry of ASEAN" will combine the three elements of culture, traditional foods and business opportunities, said Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, the wife of the Malaysian Prime Minister.

The first programme, "ASEAN Food Fiesta" with its theme "Rice that Binds Us", will celebrate and introduce the traditional foods of ASEAN nations which are rice-based.

"The fiesta will highlight ASEAN unity in diversity through cuisines based on rice," she told Malaysian journalists here Wednesday.

The fiesta will include cooking demonstrations by chefs on five different dishes based on rice, she said.

Rosmah said the second programme would be a forum on the voice of ASEAN women, with the sub-theme "Exploring Business Opportunities for Rural Women in ASEAN".

She said this forum would highlight the importance of cottage industries in empowering the economy of rural women.

Experts from international agencies like Kundhari Kadiresan from the Food and Agriculture Organisation and Janet Wong of UN Women will present working papers on effective support to empower rural women.

An estimated 450 local and foreign participants are expected to attend the forum.

The third programme will be cultural performances by ASEAN member nations, to be held during the summit.

These performances will be held simultaneously at popular locations in Kuala Lumpur such as the Pavilion mall and Central Market.

"We want to include Malaysians and tourists in the summit this time, not just delegates," said Rosmah.

The cultural performances would hopefully promote understanding, solidarity and unity among ASEAN nations, thus ensuring the continuity of ASEAN cultures and heritage, especially as we move towards the ASEAN Community," she added.

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