

Perak Arts Festival 2012.. A momentous display of colours!



The recently concluded Perak Arts Festival was an awesome event which truly showcased the rich heritage of the state, if not the country. The event was held in Dataran MBI over three days beginning September 14 to 16. The festival was opened to the public from morning till midnight. Four pavilions were erected on the well-manicured square to exhibit the cultures of the four major races – Malay, Chinese, Indian and Orang Asli. The mode was interactive allowing visitors to try their hands at making simple handicrafts while enjoying the ambiance that filled the purpose-built pavilions. For the duration of the three days, cultural heritage indigenous to the races such as handicraft, traditional games and dances including martial arts were on display for general viewing.

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foreword

Dato' Hamidah Osman State Executive Councillor for Tourism



The Merdeka month of August has come to a close and with it the culmination of a string of touristic activities which have left many clamouring for more. High on the list was the Merdeka Day celebration which was held in front of the Town Hall along Jalan Panglima Bukit Gantang Wahab. Although it pales in comparison to the mammoth parade in Kuala Lumpur, the significance was in no way diminished. Then came the Citra Perak Amanjaya street fiesta, a first ever event of its kind in the state. The finale was obviously the Malaysia Day celebration on September 16 which was held in conjunction with the debutant Perak Arts Festival 2012. A number of equally significant side shows were held during the festivities. They did much to enliven the merry-making that ensued.

My primary concern as of this moment is the February 2014 review of Lenggong Valley by UNESCO. The valley's status as a world heritage site will be in jeopardy if those entrusted with its care fail to perform to expectation. The responsibilities they shoulder are tremendous. The good name of the state, if not the nation, is at stake. There is a good lead time before the inevitable happens. I implore on those responsible to do their utmost in protecting our "crown jewel".

The emphasis in this issue of tourism news is on the recently concluded Perak Arts Festival. The three-day fest was a success judging from public response. I wish to congratulate the organisers, a mixed bag of personalities, for their foresight and perseverance. There will be a repeat in 2013.

Although Visit Perak Year (VPY) 2012 is drawing to a close it is not parting time for us in the tourism industry. We still have plenty to offer. Over in

Kuala Kangsar a homestay carnival is scheduled to start on October 5. Make a date with the royal town to claim your piece of the action.

There was so much to see, do and learn from the three day fest. The making of the famous labu sayong or earthen jars was on show at the Malay pavilion. Perak's famed gold embroidery on velvet cloth was the other attraction. There was even a dramatisation of a groom negotiating with his future in-laws for the hand of their lovely daughter, a fitting sight indeed. Kite-making and kite-flying were the other most indulged activities on hand.

The Chinese pavilion showcased the making a lion's head for use during a lion dance. Although no dance was evident it caught the imagination of many who flocked to the tent. Chinese calligraphy, paper cutting and Chinese chess were the other major draws.

At the Indian pavilion one could learn how to paint hands, using henna. The decorative floor designing, using coloured rice so often associated with Deepavali, known as kolam, was also on display. A turban-tying demonstration did much to excite the eager onlookers.

The Orang Asli pavilion, on the other hand, had a very interesting array of handicrafts on display ranging from catapults and rattan baskets to blowpipes. An impromptu blow pipe competition was on the agenda, pitting the experts against the novices. At one corner a small group of Orang Asli from Pos Raia was seen painting their faces in preparation for the sewang dance.

Traditional events were not confined to the pavilions only. On all three days, there were musical and dance performances by the various communities. Ethnic martial arts were also on the cards - Silat by the Malays, wushu by the Chinese and the Indians, selambam.

On the musical front, the Indians had their traditional Bharathanatyam dance; the Punjabis their energetic Bhangra routines which would leave one gasping for air while the Orang Asli their Sewang. As for the Chinese their staple was the energetic dragon dance.

Zapin and keroncong were performed with much gusto by a Malay cultural group, Seri Murni from Kuala Kangsar. The keroncong melody seemed to blend in with environment, as the day turned hot and humid, a typical afternoon in tropical Malaysia. It would have been perfect if a stall serving



Poetry in Motion



If that
on a fine
bined both
the accompaniment

young coconuts had been around.
wasn't enough, the youngsters put
display of fusion dance which com-
graffiti art and flash mob, dancing to
of the kompang cymbals.

As the flash mob dancers gyrated to the rhythms of traditional Malay percussion, their routine soon morphed into a joget. The transition was so natural that it was a joy to see.



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Editorial Board:

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Graphics:

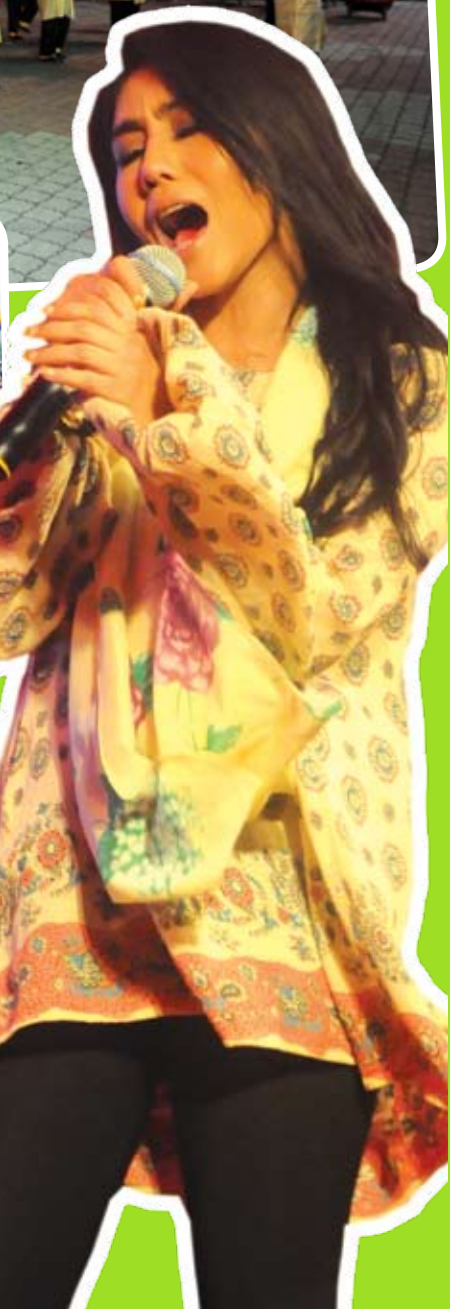
Muhammad Shahir and Rosli Mansor.

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There was always something of interest for the visitors to participate in. They were definitely spoiled for choice. Even pre-schoolers were not left out. They got the chance to paint and colour to their whim and fancy and won prizes in the course of the activity. Art is a term that describes a diverse range of human activities. The by-products of these activities are the visual arts that one sees at the festival. This was evident during the Perak Arts Festival. A repeat is in the offing come 2013.



Tourism Roundup

HAMIDAH VISITS LENGGONG VALLEY

Dato' Hamidah Osman and her tourism entourage visited Lenggong Valley recently to see things first-hand. Her concerns were the requirements stipulated by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation in reviewing the valley's heritage status. A management plan has to be submitted to UNESCO by February 2014.

The most pressing issues are sign postings on roads leading to the Lenggong Archaeological Museum and Gallery and the availability of guides who can take tourists to the seven archeological sites scattered around Lenggong Valley. Since acquiring the heritage site status, visitors to Lenggong Valley have doubled.

To celebrate the pronouncement, Hamidah proposed an annual week-long fiesta around June 30, the date UNESCO declared Lenggong Valley as a World Heritage Site.

Infrastructure up-grading works are required. They range from lodging to transportation and promotion. She hoped the Federal Government could allocate a budget to liven up Lenggong Valley. The valley management committee should comprise representatives from the Department of Natural Heritage, Tourism Malaysia, Tourism Perak, MATTA, and even taxi drivers.

This is one tall order but with commitment the ultimate will be realised.



MALAYSIA DAY CELEBRATION



A thunderous beat of 49 Chinese drums greeted Chief Minister Dato' Seri Dr. Zambry Abd Kadir when he arrived at Dataran MBI on the night of Sunday, September 16. He was accompanied by his wife, Datin Seri DiRaja Saripah Zulkifli. Thousands of people joined in the occasion, turning it into one huge party. The crowd was then entertained to traditional music and cultural dances followed by a poetry recital by Malaysians of all races.

After putting the finishing touches to the 1Malaysia mural by students from Cosmopoint College, Zambry addressed the crowd.

In conjunction with Malaysia Day, the Discover Perak (Jom Terokai Perak) smart phone application was launched, the first of its kind in Malaysia.

Several prizes were awarded during the celebration. Lee Shin Thong from Sg Siput was declared champion in the Under-12 Mandarin patriotic song competition. She won a RM500 cash prize. Kampar District won the best performance award in the Citra Perak Amanjaya 2012 street fiesta, taking home RM5,000 while Kemas Tambun won the top prize in the children's category, with cash prize of RM1,000.

Winners of Perak International Xplorace 2012, which concluded in the afternoon, were also announced. Third place was won by a mixed French and South Korean team. The Yemeni team was placed second while Team Malaysia emerged victorious. They won cash prizes of US\$10,000, US\$20,000 and US\$30,000 respectively.

The night closed with a rousing rendition of Jalur Gemilang and the 1Malaysia theme song followed by a brilliant firework display.

TOURISM CALENDER - OCTOBER 2012

- October 2: **KURSUS KESEDARAN PELANCONGAN DI KALANGAN PEMANDU TEKSI**.
Venue: Pulau Pangkor
Contact : Tourism Perak at **605-2083600**
- October 5 to 6 : **TOURIST GUIDE UPDATE PRODUCT (CTRE)**
Venue: Lembah Lenggong.
Contact : Tourism Perak at **605-2083600**
- October 5 to 6: **INTERNATIONAL PERAK & IMT-GT HOMESTAY FAIR 2012**
Venue: Kuala Kangsar
Contact : Tourism Perak at **605-2083600** / Motour at **605-255 0413/14**