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NEW SABAH TIMES
Sabah's First Established Paper

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The Taggungu Fiesta 2006 held at Paitan tamu ground in Beluran recently is a springboard for that district to participate actively in the tourism sector. This is further empathised with the fact that this festival will be carried out annually.

This celebration which recognises the musical instrument tagungu, made of bamboo and played like gongs, is believed to be of great interest to tourists, while celebrating the traditional dances of the Orang Sungai community there.

In the past, Beluran was known as a rural district, almost inaccessible by road but this has changed with the establishment of a good road linking the East and the West Coast towns of Sabah.

With good road access and a tourism product worth looking at, Beluran seems to be ready to present its own unique offering during the Visit Malaysia Year (VMY) 2007. The VMY 2007 will see this celebration being promoted with other festivals like the Lepa Rgeatta, River Fest, Sago Palm Fest, Kalimantan Festival and the Harvest Festival to name a few. These festivals are celebrated by the various ethnic groups.

Datuk Karim Bujang the Assistant Minister of Tourism, Culture and Environment who launched the festival says tourism products like the festival will generate income for the residents in that area. He says the festival will promote Beluran to people from other dis-

tricts as well as Malaysia as a whole.

"This festival will ensure that traditional music as well as traditional costumes is preserved," he said.

"All this will of course contribute to the economic growth of the people; this is because tourists like traditional handicrafts and traditional attires when they visit rural areas," he adds.

He says music and arts should be taught by institution of higher studies as this could ensure that traditions are perpetuated.

"The government will do its part by building Cultural Halls in all districts in Sabah soon," he shares.

The two day programme saw various activities including gong beating contest and kulintang beating contest among others. About 20 participants from the Sungai community living in Beluran, Pitas and Kudat took part in the event. A singing competition was also held.

Several booths there were taken up by government agencies such as Police, Agriculture Department, Fisheries, Rural Development Cooperation and the Election Commission.

Also present during the event were the Beluran Member of Parliament Datuk Ronald Kiandee, Pitas State Assemblyman, Datuk Masrani Parman, Libaran Member of Parliament, Datuk Juslie Ajirol, Sabah Sungai Association Chairman, Ahmad Abdul, District Officer Rajibi Haji Aman and UMNO divisional Vice Chief Aspah Abdullah Sani.

By ANNA VIVIENNE
and SANTE VILLIAMON

Paitan's Taggungu Fiesta

