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SABAH



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Sabah, Land Below the Wind is packed with beautiful sceneries and sights. There are blue skies mirrored in calm lakes, gigantic trees reaching up to sky like giants, greens tree tops silhouetted against the sky like silent ancient soldiers holding up the blue beyond, there are blazing sunsets and gently hued sunrises, bubbling streams and rivers ... and then there are the people.

We have beautiful people, graceful and lovely, friendly and warm. And we have many beauty contests to pick the fairest of them all.

The most famous one is the Harvest Festival Queen. This is where all districts in Sabah send their representatives to vie for the crown. Judges will usually shake their head...which one to choose? All of them are beautiful, all are achingly lovely.

So additional points will come from intelligent quotients (IQ) tests, where questions will be posed to the participants. The one adjudged the fairest will wear the crown for a year.

Then there is the Coconut Fest queen. The Coconut Fest is held in Kudat yearly to commemorate the copra industry in that district. It also hopes to evoke tourism interest in that area.

The participating ladies are usually from the Kudat District representing various villages. They have to wear attire made from materials derived from the Coconut tree. At that time you can see young ladies walking around in coconut fronds. Interesting. Anyway, the queen will only be representing that particular district in tourism events, if at all.

The Pesta Kalimantan, held in Keningau will also see beautiful girls from that district vying for the Kalimantan Queen Crown. They will usually show off the colourful attire of the Murut tribe on stage. They will be judged on their costume, gracefulness and beauty as well as their IQ. The Pesta Jagung or Maize Fest held in Kota Marudu is another event that will see a bevy of beauties go on stage. They will sashay to upbeat music, showing off their creation. Their costume are usually influenced by the Maize motives. The winner will be dubbed the Maize Queen for a year. To date, however, I do not know what their roles are in promoting maize of the maize industry in that district but the event itself is an attractive one and worth showing off to our tourists.

It must also be stressed that the festivals are folk festivals and they commemorate the norm of a people. During the event, villagers from far in the interior will come and celebrate the event. There will be booths for traditional food and drinks as well as local handicrafts at the reception ground.

Tourists will have a vast variety of souvenir items to choose from and the prize is very minimal to say the least. A string of local beads can cost from only RM2.

The beauty contests held during such events are good tourism supplements to the actual event and should be promoted actively.

Our tourists will then see that the beauty of nature in Sabah is complemented by its beautiful people.

