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Gongs resonate in Matunggong again

On Oct 23 and 24, a small village in Matunggong Kudat will come alive and will affirm its claim to fame; the Pesta Gong Matunggong 2007.

This event seeks to celebrate the gong, an instrument that figures a lot in the life of the people in Sabah.

Gong making in Kg Sumangkap Matunggong has been carried out for a long time. In fact this area is now synonymous with gong making.

The people's commercial venture here is traditional in origin and as such it is being celebrated annually to commemorate its economic contribution to the community.

There are about 20 families involved in this venture there and they are very well acquainted with visitors, especially those who want to purchase their wares. They also play hosts to tourists who wish to know how gongs are made.

And on Oct 23 and 24, they will congregate at the padang there and celebrate their livelihood through various interesting activities.

As usual most of them will put on their traditional attire; since they are mostly Rungus, one can hope to see them decked out in their full traditional attire including the bead sashes and intricately woven headgear.

The women, especially, will be very colourful.

Besides the traditional costume, visitors will also be able to look at all the type of gongs on sale there. For those who want to purchase gongs, this is a good time to do that.

There are also souvenir gongs being sold. These items are usually key chains and wall decorations.

During the launch of the event, a group of people will beat the gong for several minutes.

Last year 500 people beat the gong together to mark the launch of the gong festival.

This year there may be about 300 people participating in the gong beating; but this is still quite a crescendo as they beat their gongs together in melodious harmony. This sight is worth seeing and experiencing. There is a certain element of 'ancientness' in the melody.

The Rungus beads handicrafts will also take up several booths there.

The highlight of the event is actually the beauty contest.

During this time, a bevy of beauty from villages in and around Matunggong district will vie for the Gong Festival Beauty Queen Crown.

If last year's event is anything to go by, well, they will come in dresses decorated with miniature gongs, tiara with little gongs for decorations, tiny gong earrings and bracelets...the works.

They will sashay on stage, showing off their attire as well as their beauty. As usual the winner of the crown will be dubbed 'Ambassador of the Gong' or "Queen of the Gong Festival Matunggong 2007".

This is a title vied for by many girls in this district.

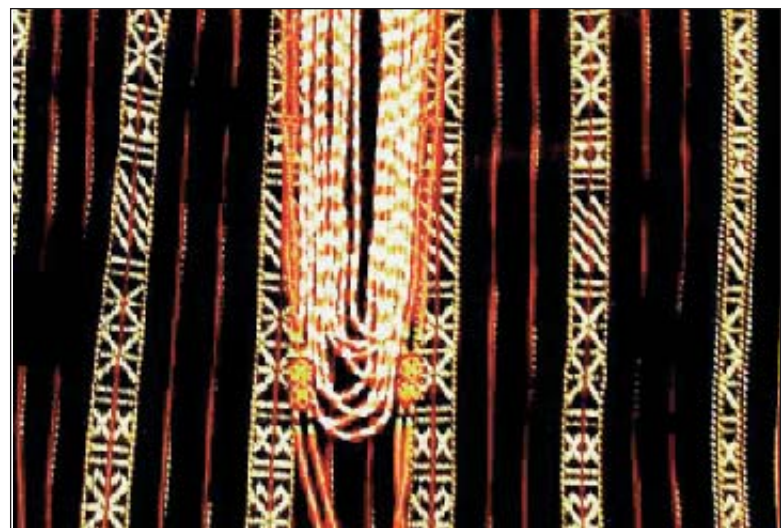
The two day event in Kg Sumangkap Matunggong is an event worth looking at. In fact, it being listed in the State's tourism is a great idea and a brilliant move by the authorities to ensure that gong making is carried out and perpetuated for generations to come.

Of course, this also enables the people to reap more revenue from their craft.

If you are guiding tourists on these two days, bring them to Sumangkap; you will really make their day.



By ANNA VIVIENNE



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