



MEDIA RELEASE

GAWAI DAYAK OPEN HOUSE 2004

In Malaysia, the state of Sarawak observes its month-long annual festival – ***Gawai Dayak*** – from **1 to 30 June**. This auspicious event brings together the Iban, Bidayuh, Orang Ulu and other tribal groups that form the Dayak race.

The festival marks the end of the rice harvest and is an extended thanksgiving celebration before the new farming season begins. For the Dayak community, it is a time to make amends for past differences and to rekindle old friendships or form new ones. As Malaysians treasure strong family ties, this festival means family reunions, paying respect to the elderly and visits to friends and relatives.

Similar to other major festive celebrations in the country, a national level “open house” for *Gawai Dayak* is organised to enable Malaysians, regardless of race and religion, to join in the merriment. The “open house” concept promotes racial tolerance, mutual respect and national unity in this multi-racial country.

The ***Gawai Dayak Open House 2004*** to be held at ***Dataran Perbandaran (City Fan)*** in Miri, Sarawak, on **12 June at 9am** is a

whole-day affair. It provides a good opportunity for tourists from around the world and the public to get a glimpse of the unique culture and traditions of the Dayak community.

Dignitaries expected to grace the event include His Majesty The King, the Yang Dipertuan Agong Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Ibni Al-marhum Tuanku Syed Putraa Jamalullail; the Prime Minister, Dato Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi; the Chief Minister of Sarawak, The Rt. Hon. Datuk Patinggi Taib Mahmud; and the Hon. Minister of Tourism, Datuk Dr. Leo Michael Toyad.

The entertainment bill will feature popular artistes such as Erra Fazira, Vince, Rueben and Rosmah, traditional and modern cultural performances, a comedy sketch by Senario and a colourful fireworks display at night.

The *Gawai Dayak* Open House will end at approximately 12 midnight.

For more information, please visit web site www.tourism.gov.my or www.sarawaktourism.com

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