



PRESS RELEASE

60th Anniversary of the Establishment of Diplomatic Relations between Japan and Malaysia **THE 2017 (41st) 'BON ODORI' DANCE FESTIVAL IN KUALA LUMPUR**

Mr. Wataru Oba, the Organising Chairman of the 2017 'Bon Odori' Dance Festival in Kuala Lumpur, is pleased to invite everyone to this year's Bon Odori celebration.

The **41st Bon Odori Festival** is jointly organised by The Japan Club of Kuala Lumpur, The Japanese School of Kuala Lumpur and Embassy of Japan, in co-operation with the Alumni Look East Policy Society (ALEPS), Japan Graduates' Association of Malaysia (JAGAM), The Japanese Chamber of Trade & Industry Malaysia (JACTIM) and Tourism Selangor Sdn Bhd. It will be held on the 22nd of July 2017 at **Kompleks Sukan Negara Shah Alam (Panasonic)**.

Due to the efforts of approximately 1,000 volunteers from the aforementioned organisations, the event has been successful over the years and has turned into a vibrant spectacle that people look forward to annually.

Tourism Selangor Sdn Bhd has given their full support to this event by providing the assistance of RELA, traffic police, shuttle bus services, medical teams and more. The Selangor State Government and Invest Selangor Berhad have also generously donated in cash to support this event. The organisers are again expecting a turnout of more than 35,000 participants this year.

Bon Odori is a Japanese Folk Dance. It is held during the mid-year and is always accompanied by singing and dancing in tune with the lively rhythm of drums, gongs and flutes. The festival is celebrated annually as a popular get-together summer event that is held in every district of every city in Japan.

In Malaysia, the festival dates back as far as 1977. It is held mainly as an effort to promote and strengthen cultural ties between Malaysia and Japan by allowing the locals to experience a variety of Japanese foods, drinks, art and dance. Many Malaysians participate in this event every year and what started as a small affair for Japanese expatriates as a means to immerse their children in Japanese culture, has slowly grown into an event that attracts over 30,000 participants annually, which makes it the largest Japanese Cultural Event in Malaysia and possibly even the largest Bon Odori Festival in the world outside of Japan.

This event provides a good opportunity for those who are interested in experiencing Japanese culture first-hand as participants are encouraged to take part in the dance. The Junior High School students of The Japanese School of Kuala Lumpur will dress up in traditional attire which consists of Yukata (summer kimono) and Zori (straw, leather and wooden sandals) while performing on the *Yagura*, a special platform set up in the centre of the stadium, and will lead the crowd encircling the *Yagura to the Bon Odori dance*.



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Besides these activities, participants can also look forward to sampling a variety of delicious Japanese foods, drinks and snacks from participating stalls.

Additionally, this year marks the 60th Anniversary of Diplomatic Relations between Malaysia & Japan, and to celebrate, there will be a special fireworks display.

Admission is free and the gates will open from 4:30 pm onwards. The event will kick off at 7pm with the Welcoming Drums performance by students from The Japanese School of Kuala Lumpur. Guest performers during the intervals will include the Japanese Traditional Cultural Dance Group, consisting of local school students; the Malaysian Cultural Dance Group, and a group of powerful Japanese “Wadaiko” drummers.

Due to the limited availability of parking spaces, participants are encouraged to utilise the free shuttle bus service provided on the day of the festival by the organisers. The shuttle will run at regular intervals from the Shah Alam KTM station (Section 19, Shah Alam) to the stadium between the hours of 4pm and 11pm.

Co-organisers:

1. The Japan Club of Kuala Lumpur
2. The Japanese School of Kuala Lumpur
3. Embassy of Japan

In co-operation with (By Alphabetical Order):

1. Alumni Look East Policy Society (ALEPS)
2. Japan Graduates' Association of Malaysia (JAGAM)
3. The Japanese Chamber of Trade & Industry Malaysia (JACTIM)
4. Tourism Selangor Sdn Bhd

Supported by:

1. The State Government of Selangor
2. Invest Selangor Berhad