

Al Dhafra Festival 2010 to kick off on 30th January

Abu Dhabi, January 26: Thousands of camels will line up in Madinat Zayed when the Al Dhafra Festival kicks off on 30th January in the Western Region.

The 3rd Al Dhafra Festival, the most inspiring show of local tradition and heritage, is organised by the Abu Dhabi Authority for Culture and Heritage (ADACH) under the patronage of General Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, crown prince of Abu Dhabi and deputy supreme commander of the UAE Armed Forces.

Over 1200 proud owners of purebred Arabian camels will vie for prizes at contests in various categories including the most beautiful camel in the world.

Prizes worth AED 42 million have been set aside as the preparations gained momentum with hundreds of stalls built in mud and clay continued to rise in the region to showcase local produces and traditional handicrafts.

The event will run until 8th February attracting tens of thousands of visitors from home and abroad.

An official announcement of the Al Dhafra Festival 2010 was made today at a press conference attended by Mohammed Khalaf Al Mazrouei, Director General of ADACH and Chairman of the Festival's Higher Organizing Committee.

Mazrouei said that the event has earned regional and global fame as a result of the strategy of conservation and restoration of cultural heritage of the country.

"The third session of the Dhafra Festival confirms what has been achieved in the previous two sessions: success; fame (both regionally and globally) for the festival and improvements in the strategy to safeguard and revive our cultural heritage in all its forms," he said.

"This is particularly highlighted by the unprecedented popularity of the festival events," he added.

He alluded to the success of the festival in the preservation of the Bedouin culture, which has played a role in marking 'Al-Dhafra' as a destination in the world tourism map.

"The festival has succeeded in introducing Bedouin culture to a wider audience, and places 'Dhafar' in Al Gharbia (Western Region) firmly onto the international tourism map," Mazrouei said.

"It became synonymous with the preservation of our cultural heritage in Abu Dhabi, and served as a reminder of the attention that has been given by our leadership to promote Al Gharbia as a world-class tourism destination," he added.

This year there will be a new contest launched as part of the Festival, the Hallab Competition, where the winners are the camels that produce the maximum amount of milk.

Alongside the Festival, ADACH is holding the Traditional Market which displays handicrafts from the UAE region.

"A large part of our endeavor is to promote various aspects of our local heritage," said Mazrouei.

"The shops offer traditional handicraft and food along with other traditional activities," he explained.

There will also be a "Kids' Village" held there that boasts of many activities for children, including traditional shows, art and heritage competitions, in a bid to attract more families.

The Festival will host many competitions that have been popular during its previous sessions, including the Dates' Packaging Contest, Best Poetry in Describing Camels, the Dhafra Portrayal Competition and the Dhafra in the Eyes of Photographers Competition.

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