

# The Jakarta Post

## Jakarta Highland Gathering lures foreign, local visitors

The Jakarta Post, Tangerang, Banten | Mon, 05/24/2010 10:28 AM | Headlines

This year, the lyrical sounds of bagpipers at the Jakarta Highland Gathering lured both city dwelling Scotsmen in kilts and culturally curious locals who flocked to the Sunday event.

“In past years, the Highland Gathering felt like it was meant more for expatriate communities but this year, I finally had the time to check it out myself after perusing through the gathering’s website and asking around about the events,” said an Indonesian visitor, Ichsan Samiron, on the sidelines of the gathering at the Imperial Golf Club in Lippo Karawaci, Tangerang, Banten.

He and his wife were eager to see the bagpipes, kilts, caber throwing and wood chopping, something rarely seen in Indonesia.

The couple, who said they traveled abroad quite often, felt that learning new cultures deepened their tolerance of others and their sense of respect toward their own.

“We have such a rich culture but it lacks exposure,” said Ichsan, who works with expatriate colleagues.

Another couple, Tutung and Lily, brought their two children along to expose them to other cultures in the city besides the daily dose of Javanese culture they experience at home.

“We hope this will broaden their knowledge and understanding about other people’s cultures,” said Lily, a foreign bank employee. “The children seem excited about the musical parade and competitions.”

According to the organizer’s spokesperson, Olivia Marzuki, after a two-year hiatus due to security concerns and the economic crisis, the event this year promoted a richer multicultural mix.

“We aim to attract a crowd consisting of 50 percent locals and 50 percent expatriates from a target of 10,000 visitors,” said Olivia.

“We respect the people who we share the land with and wish to share the uniqueness of the Scottish culture with them.”

The 31st Highland Gathering this year boasted 50 foreign participants from countries such as Australia, Hong Kong, Malaysia and Singapore, Olivia told The Jakarta Post.

Australian bagpiper and Scotsman, Adam Haven from the Sydney Piper Club, said he was excited to see such a rich multicultural crowd.

“It’s great to be here. I didn’t expect it would be this huge,” said the professional bagpiper.

**Malaysian native, Jag Ajit Singh of the Sri Damesh band consisting of Sikhs playing Scottish instruments, said events such as these were not held in his home country. The gathering was a chance for him to learn and meet up with bands and visitors from other cultures.**

**“Music, you see, connects people,” said Jag. “We learn a little bit more about mankind by through music.”**

The cultural melting pot at the event received a great response.

“This is what a true gathering is. The Indonesian people are very welcoming when it comes to the Scottish culture,” said the society’s chieftain, Elaine Cameron. (gzl)