

# All aglow at lantern parade

REVERTING to tradition, a group of 100 children took part in a lantern procession around the Penang Times Square during the mall's Chinese Lantern Festival on Saturday.

As night fell, the children lit up their paper lanterns in anticipation of the 1.5km procession. Led by a lion dance troupe, they marched along Jalan Dato Keramat, Jalan Kampung Jawa Baru, Jalan Timah and Jalan Kampung Jawa Lama before returning to the mall.

Jointly organised by Komtar assemblyman Ng Wei Aik, Ivory Properties Group's charity arm Ivory Cares and the DAP Kampung Kolam branch, the festival was aimed at reacquainting the younger generation with Chinese culture and tradition, as well as injecting some life to the area which is usually quiet at night.

"In these modern times, our children seldom carry lanterns like we used to in the past. Hopefully, this event will give them a newfound appreciation of this meaningful tradition and let them have some fun in the process.

"Being a heritage city, it's vital that we maintain our cultures and heritage. Besides protecting the buildings, we need to maintain our unique cultural aspects as well," Ng said.

Among those who took part in the lantern procession were siblings Evelyn, six, and Angie Lau, three. Their father Lau Teong Lam said he wanted them to have some fun while learning a little bit about culture.

Student Teh Yik Ting, 17, was among those seen admiring a display of intricately crafted and ornamented lanterns — the handiwork of the Lantern Decorating Contest participants — at the mall's open area. Teh, who lives nearby, said she decided to take a leisurely stroll to the mall to see what the lantern festival was all about.

Divided into three categories — primary, secondary and open, the entries came in a variety of shapes, sizes and themes. While the younger contestants opted for whimsical

dolls and animals, those in the open category showcased their creativity by fashioning dragon and phoenix-shaped lanterns out of everyday objects.

Open category winner Tan Kiang Hong, a 17-year-old student from Chung Ling (Private) High School, stood out with his dragon lantern made from foam and soft drink can bottoms, embellished with sequins and complete with lighting.

"It took me four days to build. Actually, I hadn't put much thought into the design, but just made it up as I went along. To be honest, I never expected to win as I only joined for the fun of it," he said.

There was also a singing contest for children below 12, which attracted 30 precocious young talents. Taking to the stage with aplomb, they exhibited nerves of steel in front of such a large audience, and sang their hearts out.

Earlier, the crowd were also treated to an enthralling chingay performance by the North Malaysia Chingay Association. Nonchalantly balancing the gigantic flags on their heads and flicking it over to their teammates, they were accorded rapturous applause from an impressed audience.



**Outstanding:**  
Tan's winning  
dragon  
lantern.



**Fun walk:** The young children setting off on their 1.5km lantern procession on Saturday night.