



## **KL FESTIVAL FUELS DOWNTOWN KL'S ECONOMIC RENEWAL**

*City cultural initiative targets 100,000 visitors, SME growth and stronger investor confidence in the capital's urban core*

**KUALA LUMPUR, 13 MARCH 2026** – KL Festival (KL Fest) will take place from 6 to 31 May as part of a long-term strategy to rejuvenate the capital through culture-led urban regeneration. Organised by Think City and Kuala Lumpur City Hall (DBKL), and supported by the Ministry of Finance and the Federal Territories Department (Prime Minister's Department), the initiative aligns with Visit Malaysia 2026, Warisan KL, and Kuala Lumpur's designation as a UNESCO Creative City of Design.

More than a cultural celebration, the Kuala Lumpur Festival with an injection of RM3 million is designed as an economic intervention. Over 80 multidisciplinary events will unfold across more than 26 heritage buildings, public spaces and streets, delivering over 700 hours of programming. With a target of more than 100,000 visitors, the festival is expected to extend footfall beyond traditional business hours, increase dwell time in the city centre and stimulate spending across food and beverage outlets, retail, transport services and surrounding commercial establishments.

This year's theme, "Memory & Tomorrow," reflects Kuala Lumpur's evolution as a city shaped by heritage, migration and continuous transformation, reinforcing the role of creativity, cultures and communities in shaping liveable, inclusive and globally competitive cities.

Kuala Lumpur's population of 2.1 million, alongside Greater KL's 8.8 million catchment, provide a strong domestic participation base, supplemented by interstate and international visitors under Visit Malaysia 2026.

According to Dato' Hamdan Abdul Majeed, Managing Director, Think City "This festival demonstrates how culture can function as a catalytic role in regeneration strategies. Physical upgrades alone do not sustain city centres. Activation, identity and consistent public engagement are critical drivers of investment and commercial activity. KL Fest is structured to reactivate space, increase visitation and create meaningful economic opportunities for local enterprises."



Flagship programmes anchoring the festival's economic and place activation impact includes Jogeton at Dataran Merdeka; ASWARA Artskap at ASWARA; Irama Pusaka at Auditorium Bandaraya over three nights; Public Art Installations through the KL Architecture Festival Competition across Downtown KL; Warung Terang by Filamen, activating laneways and streets through projection mapping; Planet KL at River of Life and "The Making of Merdeka Textile Museum: A Creative Journey" amongst others.

KL Fest will also feature theatre, dance and performance works staged in key cultural venues, including Fragments of Tuah (Sekolah Seni Malaysia, KL), Pending (Chan She Shu Yuen Ancestral Hall), Siapa Cacat? (GMBB), Origin of a Tale (Rumah Tangsi), Chapter 2 (ASWARA), and The Lessons of Silence (The Godown Arts Centre), reinforcing the festival's role in sustaining creative livelihoods and venue activation.

Globally, major arts festivals have demonstrated strong economic spillover effects. The Manchester International Festival has reported economic contributions exceeding £100 million, while the Edinburgh Festival Fringe generates more than £200 million annually. Closer to home, George Town Festival attracts up to 250,000 visitors annually. The inaugural KL Fest drew over 140,000 visitors and supported more than 800 creative jobs and gigs, highlighting the role of sustained cultural programming in urban economic vitality.

With the majority of programmes offered free to the public, the festival also reinforces inclusive participation, ensuring that regeneration efforts benefit communities alongside businesses. By bringing together cultural institutions, property owners, corporate partners and community organisations, KL Fest aims to demonstrate how public-private collaboration can accelerate urban renewal while strengthening civic pride.

Further details are available at [www.klfestival.com.my](http://www.klfestival.com.my).

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**About Kuala Lumpur Festival (KL Fest):**

KL Fest is Kuala Lumpur's flagship city celebration, inspired by its designation as a UNESCO Creative City of Design and aligned with the Warisan KL aspiration. The festival brings Downtown Kuala Lumpur to life through creativity, cultures and communities, presenting curated local and international performances, installations and public programmes accessible to all. Held across heritage buildings and public spaces, KL Fest transforms historic areas into vibrant cultural destinations. For more information, visit [www.klfestival.com.my](http://www.klfestival.com.my)



## **About Think City**

Think City is an impact organisation established in 2009 to create more sustainable and equitable places for the benefit of all. Our knowledge, skills and strategies focus on urban solutions, the environment, social communities, and the cultural economy. Think City is a wholly owned subsidiary of Khazanah Nasional Berhad (the sovereign wealth fund of the Government of Malaysia). For more information, log on to [thinkcity.com.my](http://thinkcity.com.my).

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