

Zamboanga City continues to bustle with activities as the 2011 Fiesta Hermosa enters its 6th day today, October 6.

Newly-appointed Tourism Secretary Ramon Jimenez Jr. will keynote the fiesta commemorative program set after the float parade and street dance on October 11, the eve of the feast of Nuestra Señora La Virgen del Pilar.

Mayor Celso Lobregat said the expected arrival of the new Tourism Secretary in Zamboanga will help boost the City's efforts to promote Zamboanga, Asia's Latin City, not only in the country but in other parts of the globe.

Aptly said, the theme of this year's Zamboanga Hermosa Festival "Zamboanga Hermosa..Vamos a Zamboanga" drumbeats the invitation for people far and near, to feel the warmth of the city's hospitality and discover its rich yet diverse culture and traditions as well as enjoy the scenic spots.

Mayor Lobregat said this year's Fiesta Hermosa celebration seeks to reverse the negative perception about the city's peace and order condition by actively promoting Zamboanga as a tourism and investment hub.

The mayor has enjoined people from all over the region, the country and the world to come witness and participate in the series of activities lined up for the festival which is in honor of Nuestra Senora de la Virgen del Pilar, the city's patron saint.

The Fiesta celebration unfolded October 1 with Cosechas de Zamboanga, an agri-trade fair at the Veterans Memorial, nightly Inter-Barangay Cluster Cultural Presentation at the Paseo del Mar, 7th Mayor Celso Lobregat Golf Tournament and art exhibit Solamente Zamboanga at the Garden Orchid Hotel.

The celebration will lead to the Mascota competition tonight, the Fiesta Hermosa Job Fair on Oct. 7 at the Plaza del Pilar, 9th Dance Sport competition on Oct. 7 at the City Coliseum, Regatta de Zamboanga at the R.T. Lim Boulevard, Balikbayan Night at the Palmeras in Sta. Maria and the 29th Chabacano song festival at the Garden Orchid Hotel on October 9. The 5th Wow Sardinas at the R.T. Lim Boulevard on Oct. 10 and the float parade, Hermosa Street Dance competition and main program on Oct. 11 at the Joaquin Enriquez Memorial Sports Complex.

The social events will be capped on Oct. 11 with the grand fireworks display at the Paseo del Mar at 11pm.

October 12, the feast day of La Virgen del Pilar will be reserved for religious activities.

"Vamos A Zamboanga, let's go to Zamboanga, Asia's Latin City and enjoy Fiesta Hermosa, a celebration of Zamboanga's dances, songs, culture and art in honor of Nuestra Señora La

Virgen del Pilar”, Mayor Lobregat said.

He said: “We are inviting everybody from here and around the globe to come, see and experience the beautiful Zamboanga, we will have series of activities that will lead up to the feast day of our Nuestra Senora de la Virgen del Pilar on October 12.”

Today October 6, the activities will include the Pink October Walk at 7am from the City Hall front to the Joaquin Enriquez Memorial Sports Complex, opening of the JCI Philippines National Convention and 9th Mascota de Zamboanga.

Tomorrow, Oct. 7, there will be the 6th Mayor Celso Lobregat Table Tennis Cup 2011 at the Golden Boys Grill, Fiesta Hermosa Job Fair at the Plaza del Pilar, 9th Dance Sports competition at the City Coliseum and Amazing challenge sponsored by the JCI Jamboangan.

Other highlights tomorrow include the 16th Zamboanga’s Little Miss Universe 2011, Cong. Erbie Fabian Dart Tournament at the Ram’s Restaurant, Pilar College Alumni Homecoming, Vista Weekend Market at the La Vista del Mar, 1st Zamboanga Hermosa Festival Airsoft Invitational Cup and the concert of 6 bands from Manila at the Plaza del Pilar.

Activities held during the past days included the Seniors Grand Tai-chi meet up at the Paseo del Mar; blood letting at the PNRC grounds in Pettit Barracks, Pesca Kita na R.T. Lim Boulevard last October 2; opening of the Cooperative Month celebration and opening of the Filipino Elderly Week celebration; medical services for senior citizens at the Zamboanga City medical center and several others. — Sheila Covarrubias