MALACCA: Tourism and Culture Ministry will nominate the Chinese traditional Wangkang festival, held to get rid of evil spirits, to be included in the Unesco Representative List.

Its minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Nazri Abdul Aziz said the Wangkang festival would be nominated as an intangible heritage to the list and the ministry through the National Heritage Department was now doing the documentation for the nomination.

"We will definitely get listed, an old tradition that can meet the Unesco conditions, in the interest of our future generations, otherwise it will just disappear.

"There is no need to bring it (the nomination) to the cabinet first; we can list it (as a national heritage) and inform Unesco our intention to get the Wangkang festival into its list," he told reporters, here, today.

Earlier, Nazri visited the Cheng Wah Keong Temple and launched the Wangkang Procession 2017 at Kandang, here.

The Wangkang barge procession has been held since 1845 in Melaka to gather wandering souls, evil spirits and other negative elements to be sent into the unknown.

This is by way of a barge that is burned on the last day of the festival, with devotees hoping it will bring health, peace, happiness and prosperity to the world and to Malacca especially.

The Wangkang festival, brought by Hokkien migrants to Melaka in the old days, had been celebrated every five to 14 years, depending on the local Chinese community's calendar, but with a long lapse of 68 years until 2001.
On the Wangkang procession, Nazri said the last held on a big scale in Malacca was in 2001 and it would return on Feb 9, this year.

"My ministry has agreed to contribute RM100,000 to the organising of the festival. This is another attraction as I believe on that day, many people will come to see it," he said.

The procession will start from the Cheng Wah Keong Temple and wind its way through this historical city along the major roads.

The expected 4,000 procession participants include from local associations and from abroad including China, Taiwan and Singapore. — Bernama

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