

# StarMetro

WEDNESDAY  
MAY 5 2021

كشك  
121

THE STAR, WEDNESDAY 5 MAY 2021

Content: (03) 7967 1388 ext 1706/1323/1496 metro@thestar.com.my

Advertising: (03) 7966 8388

Classified: (03) 7966 8200



**Sorry sight:** A boat featured at the National Botanic Gardens in Shah Alam has a gaping hole that requires repairs.  
— SS KANESAN/The Star

# Ailing attractions

Many of Selangor's tourist sites have fallen into disrepair since the start of the MCO last year, and cash-strapped operators worry that much needs to be done before these places are ready to welcome visitors again. >2&3



**Sarawak**

Dayaks working in Peninsular Malaysia discouraged from returning home for Hari Gawai >4

**Johor**

Association wants market selling Sabah goods and produce in Bandar Seri Alam to be turned into state tourism product >5



**Perak**

Taiping zoo's contest for biggest angšana tree in Malaysia requires contestants to measure tree's perimeter >6





STAR METRO  
WATCH

### NEW BUS ROUTE

Shah Alam City Council has added four new Smart Selangor buses for a new route SA09, which will start from Aeon Big, Bukit Rimau in Seksyen 32 until Kampung Jalan Kebun, Seksyen 32. Frequency will be every 15 minutes during peak hours and 25 minutes during off-peak hours. Service hours are from 6am to 10pm.

### TRAFFIC MATTERS

There will be a road closure and traffic diversion on Jalan Tropicana Selatan 1 (Klang-bound) to facilitate LRT3 project-related works until Oct 30. For details, call 1-800-18-2585.

### KTM SERVICES

KTMB is reducing the number of ETS and KTM Intercity train services until May 17 due to the current Covid-19 pandemic. There will be eight ETS services instead of 12, with two for each route, which are Gemas-Padang Besar, KL Sentral-Ipoh and KL Sentral-Butterworth. KTM Intercity trains will run 16 services compared to 18. Passengers allowed to cross states can get a RM10 discount for online purchases using CUTIKERETAPI until June. Passengers travelling from Tuesday to Thursday will be eligible for 25% discount using KTMRAMADHAN promo code.

### COUNCIL MATTERS

> Shah Alam City Council's mobile office, Shah Alam on Wheels, will be at Aeon Mall Shah Alam in Section 13 on May 8, from 11am to 3pm. The public can lodge complaints, check and pay assessment taxes, check and pay compounds as well as check licence status. The



Overgrowth blocking the pathway to the watchtower at the Sungai Panjang Hornbill Conservation Centre. (Right) Parts of the roof at the conservation centre are missing. – Photos: SS KANESAN & GRACE CHEN/The Star

# 'Breathe new life into tourist sites in Selangor'

the STAR (05/05/2021) page 02

50% and RM30 discount offer on compounds ends May 12.  
> Selangor Municipal Council invites ratepayers to review its draft local plan for 2030 until May 31. They can do so at the lobby of its headquarters, Gombak District Land Office and 16th level of Selangor Urban and Village Planning Department. For details, visit [drt2030.mps.gov.my](http://drt2030.mps.gov.my).

### BULK WASTE COLLECTION

KDEB Waste Management Sdn Bhd will make a free collection of bulk waste such as old furniture and electrical items in Subang Jaya until May 7, in preparation for Hari Raya Aidilfitri. Priority will be given to celebrants. To arrange for collection, call 03-8081 4437 or WhatsApp 011-3558 4437.

### FREE VEHICLE INSPECTION

Puspakom is having a free voluntary vehicle inspection service for private vehicles at all its branches except Shah Alam and Pasir Gudang, from 8am to 5pm, until May 12, in conjunction with the festive season. Processing fee collected at the time of booking will be returned after inspection. Appointments can be made online via [www.mypuspakom.com.my](http://www.mypuspakom.com.my).

### FREE TALK

Cansurvive Malaysia is having a free webinar on May 22 from 3pm to 4.30pm on the topic 'The Trilogy of Natural Healing for Cancer'. To register, visit [https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN\\_GHNxz-bvR6S-yC07v68uAg](https://zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_GHNxz-bvR6S-yC07v68uAg).

### SCHOLARSHIPS

Applications for the Elena Cooke Education Fund for underprivileged SPM and STPM students to pursue tertiary education is open until May 31. Forms can be downloaded at [www.bbgs.com.my](http://www.bbgs.com.my).

By **GRACE CHEN**  
[gracechen@thestar.com.my](mailto:gracechen@thestar.com.my)

WITH the tourism industry inching towards recovery, tour operators and local communities affected by the onslaught of Covid-19 in Selangor are urging the authorities to look into tourist sites that have fallen into disrepair during the movement control order.

The Sungai Panjang Hornbill Conservation Centre in Kampung Rancangan Tanah Belia 2 Sungai Panjang in Sabak Bernam is the first case in point.

Village head Aidiezam Dollah Kosnan said the place has been poorly maintained for almost two years.

Overgrowth blocking the pathway to the watchtower, structural roofing falling apart as well as wooden benches without some of its legs at the waiting area are

The Pangsun recreation chalets and its surrounding is unlikely to appeal to tourists.

# Authorities urged to assist operators who cannot afford maintenance costs due to lull in activities

among maintenance issues that need addressing.

"For safety reasons, I tell visitors not to climb up the watchtower," said Aidiezam.

For now, visitors are advised to head to Jalan Blok 2 and Jalan Blok 4, where red and yellow-billed hornbills can be seen perched majestically in front of villagers' homes.

The ideal time for these sightings are at 7am and 6pm, daily.

"I hope something can be done to restore the conservation centre soon," he added.

Bagan Nakhoda Omar beach, located 43 minutes away, is another place in need of help.

Here, blackwater is seen flowing into the perimeter drains surrounding a food court from the public toilets, resulting in foul smell.

In environmental terms, the presence of blackwater is a sign that the water has been contaminated with urine, faeces and flush water, and that the sewerage system is in need of attention.

A beached vessel parked outside a dilapidated building is also marring the overall scenery.

Parts of the building's roofing had given way and panels from its exterior walls have fallen off.

An ominous sign of the beach's state is a crooked signboard located on the main road leading visitors to the place.

Signs of neglect are obvious in some sections of the National Botanic Gardens in Shah Alam.

At the entrance, chairs in front of the ticket counter are missing.

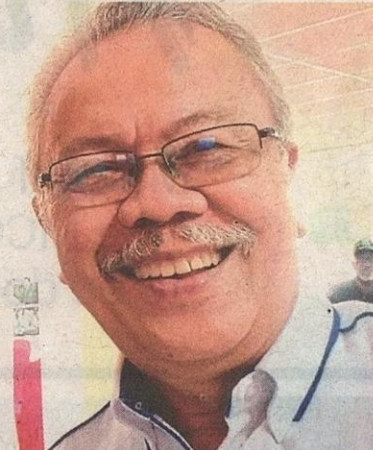
So has an entire section of a roof at the photo opportunity section nearby the padi field.

A bridge, linking the walkway across the field to a chalet, has been replaced with a single unsteady flimsy plank.

Holes are a prevalent feature here – one gaped from a boat and several others from the wooden floor of a gazebo beside the field.

Bird watchers still maintain that the lack of maintenance at these facilities has not affected the number of bird species that can be found here.

Selangor Tourism Association advisor Taib Wahab, who has 35 years of experience in the tourism industry, said the upkeep of facili-



Taib: Upkeep of facilities at tourist spots play an important role in ensuring the continuance and survival of this business sector.

ties at tourist spots was important in ensuring the continuance and survival of the business sector.

"When people travel to a place, they expect to come away with good experiences.

"If a destination cannot fulfil this criteria, they will not return nor recommend it to others.

"It is also embarrassing for those bringing friends, relatives or guests from overseas," said Taib.

In his recent trips around the state to design tour packages, Taib listed down Sungai Sepang that offered river cruises and fishing trips, Chiling Waterfall in Kuala Kubu Baru, as well as the Pangsun recreation chalets and Gunung Nuang, both in Hulu Langat, as areas in need of attention.

Taib has also noted blackwater, which give off an unpleasant smell,





A showpiece Orang Asli house has been left to disintegrate at the National Botanic Gardens in Shah Alam.



The crooked signboard located on the main road leading visitors to the Bagan Nakhoda Omar beach.

*the STAR (05/05/2021) page 03*



A beached vessel outside a dilapidated building marring the overall scenery at the Bagan Nakhoda Omar beach.



Missing chairs at the National Botanic Gardens in Shah Alam.

The Pangsun recreation chalets, where structures have either been abandoned or are in need of repairs, on the bank of Sungai Langat.

coming from tributaries leading to Sungai Sepang as cruise vessels head further upstream.

“I was told by boatmen that the problem at Sungai Sepang, which straddles the Selangor-Negri Sembilan border, is from farm effluents on the Negri Sembilan side,” said Taib.

“The authorities should do something to intercept the effluents from flowing into the river. This is not only in the interest of tourism but also from an environmental viewpoint as well.”

Taib said some form of regulation at Chiling Waterfall was necessary where activities like open cooking were concerned so that the fragile environment would not suffer from visitor overload and abuse.

The rubbish problem at Gunung Nuang, a popular hiking destination, was another concern, he said.

Another attraction requiring attention are the Pangsun recreation chalets beside the banks of Sungai Langat in Hulu Langat.

While chalet operators offer comfort in the form of changing rooms, shelter and camping facilities for a minimal fee, more has to be done with regard to cleanliness and area outlook.

“There are areas where some chalets have either been aban-

doned or have fallen into a bad state of disrepair.

“There should be some control to ensure dilapidated structures are removed so they do not become breeding grounds for mosquitoes and snakes.

“The area is also dotted with rubbish left behind by picnickers, which should be cleared by chalet operators,” he added.

Mohd Hanafiah Hussin, who is village head of Kampung Kuala Pangsun, where these chalets are mostly located, said he has discussed the matter with the chalet operators.

They do not come under the village community management council (MPKK) but are run by individuals.

“The earliest chalets came up about 30 years ago and their numbers began to mushroom when tourism started to take off in Hulu Langat.

“These chalets were not supposed to be built so close to the riverbank as this is government reserve land but over the years, they have become a draw for tourists who use these facilities when they bathe in the river,” he explained.

Mohd Hanafiah said the operators have been told to be responsible for the maintenance of their

chalets and upkeep of the area but due to the lull in tourism activities following the MCO, they were unable to afford maintenance costs.

“They do not charge much. Some of the chalets are available for between RM25 and RM50 a day,” he said.

However, in the long term, MPKK is hoping to find a win-win solution to the issue and is inviting bodies to assist either through monetary investments or by coming forward with business operations know-how.

As Malaysia is also among the leading dive destinations in the world, Malaysia Scuba Diving Association (MSDA) vice-president Jenny Lee said although its members have no issues with facilities at some of the 19 dive destinations nationwide, there was growing concern over water pollution and fish bombing that has impacted coral reefs.

“We have one of the richest marine environments in the Indo-Pacific Basin and as healthy coral reefs are an integral part of the scuba diving experience, we hope a sustainable solution can be found to preserve these sites so that the industry can continue to thrive,” she said.

MSDA treasurer Ness Puvanes Velu and executive committee



member Mastura Abd Manap said feedback from dive centres revealed that rubbish, surface run-offs and factory as well as plantation effluents from the mainland were jeopardising marine life at dive sites.

These forms of pollution are carried by sea currents to the dive sites. As a result, the corals at the sites are floundering, leaving a less than desirable scenery for divers.

Ness said in a 2019 report on the status of coral reefs by Reef Check Malaysia (RCM), it was indicated that from a total of 180 sites surveyed by trained volunteers and government officials from marine parks, we still have a relatively high level of living coral, at 40.63%.

“But it should be noted that the value in 2018 was 42.42%,” she added.

“Examples of threats to coral life are fish bombing and illegal trawling as these have the ability to devastate large tracts of coral reefs.

“We hope those responsible can realise that their actions will also affect their livelihoods eventually,” said Ness.

Understanding that the curbing of water pollution would require time for policies to work, MSDA hopes booms can be placed at rivers running to the sea to trap rubbish as a short-term solution.

MSDA also hopes security presence can be increased at dive locations situated at vulnerable areas like Sabah, for example.

“Though the locations are now generally safe, increased presence of security patrols will go a long way in giving tourists a sense of assurance,” added Ness.