

A record-breaking heritage

KLUANG Rail Coffee, located at the Keretapi Tanah Melayu (KTM) railway station in Kluang, Johor, recently received recognition from the Malaysia Book of Records for being the "oldest railway coffee shop" in Malaysia.

Malaysia Book of Records marketing officer Jwan Heah handed over the certificate to Kluang Rail Coffee director Lim Jit Tong in a ceremony held at the 84-year-old coffee shop, which is adjacent to the Kluang train station.

Speaking after the recognition ceremony, Lim's son Lim Ben Winn, who is also a director in the Kluang Rail Coffee company, said he was proud and grateful that the kopitiam founded by his ancestor Lim Huan Hee in 1938 had been immortalised in the pages of the Malaysia Book of Records, or MBOR.

Ben Winn, as the fourth generation owner/director, said Kluang Rail Coffee now has four branches in Kluang and will open another branch in Shah Alam, Selangor next September.

"We were very happy when this family heritage kopitiam was selected to receive the MBOR award. Toasted bread is the main menu at this kopitiam and it can sell between 5,000 to 6,000 sets every day," he said.

Jwan Heah said that he hopes Kluang Rail Coffee, with the cooperation of KTM and Railway Assets Corporation (which owns the building where the coffee shop stands), can continue operating and maintaining its original kopitiam concept. Apart from being a favourite local haunt, the kopitiam is also a popular destination for tourists.

event that pays homage to the lepa, or traditional single-masted sailing boat of the Bajau community in Semporna. Colourfully-decorated boats will float out to the Celebes Sea during the festival to compete against one another for the honour of being the year's "Most Beautiful Lepa". The festival also include various cultural performances, traditional sports and games, and even a beauty pageant.

Jaffry said that the two-day Regatta Lepa is able to play an important role in improving the economy of the local community, especially those involved in organising the festival.

"The Regatta Lepa is a programme that is eagerly awaited by local and foreign tourists. This in turn provides benefits and a positive impact to the economic and social development of the local community," he said.

Jafry added that his ministry is in the process of creating a cultural village as a new tourist attraction in Sabah. An application for the initiative has been forwarded to the Tourism, Arts and Culture Ministry.

"The location of the village will be determined later. Sabah, which has cultural diversity, needs to be nurtured and inherited for the next generation," he said.

Mini cultural village

In Sarawak, Tamin assemblyman Christopher Gira Sambang said that the establishment of a Mini Dayak Cultural Village in Sibul will allow tourists to have a closer look at the culture and way of life of the Dayak people. He said non-government

Making waves

Meanwhile, in Semporna, Sabah, the Regatta Lepa or traditional water and boat festival celebrated by locals will continue on as an annual event to attract tourists, especially from abroad.

Sabah Tourism, Culture and Environment Minister Datuk Jafry Ariffin said the festival, which was put on hold in the past two years due to Covid-19, has always been part of the state's tourism calendar but is set to be more lively after this. This includes inviting foreigners to participate in the regatta and other competitions.

The Regatta Lepa is an annual

organisations (NGOs) representing the Dayaks could get together to contribute ideas and resources and further strengthen the proposal, for the consideration of the Sarawak government.

"This mini cultural village will showcase the culture and rich heritage of the Iban, Bidayuh and Orang Ulu tribes for other communities to see and can be used as a tourism product here," said Sambang at an event in Sibuh recently.

He said this mini cultural village would also be able to help the state government attract more airlines to launch direct international flights to Sibuh, thus increasing the number of foreign tourist arrivals. – Bernama



Kluang Rail Coffee, which is adjacent to the Kluang KTM station, is the oldest railway coffee shop in Malaysia. – AZHAR MAHFOF / The Star