

# GEO PARK

## GAZETTE

### THE LANGKAWI STORY: a Sustainable Tourism Destination

Tell-tale dropstones found deposited here by migrating glaciers or icebergs provided the evidence that Langkawi was once part of Gondwanaland, an ancient continent, and had moved up from the South Pole eons ago.

Another discovery, rocks in Gunung Machinchang are found embedded with fossils of trilobites, an ancient creature, that has been carbon-dated to 550 million years old making Langkawi the oldest landmass in South East Asia.

Langkawi is a geologist's treasure trove and a history book of the earth formation of the past.

~ See on Page 9-10

### NEW GEOTOURISM DESTINATION

~ See on Page 11 - 12



Newly-appointed Langkawi Development Authority CEO Dato' Haji Azizan Noordin (left) and his deputy Ahmad Zaini Zaba'ai posing for a photo with Geopark expert Prof. Ibrahim Komoo (centre).

### NEW CUSTODIAN



### GEO PARK CONSERVATION DAY

~ See on Page 25 - 27



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## NOTE:

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**Kompleks LADA, P.O. Box 60,  
Jalan Persiaran Putra 07000 Langkawi Kedah**  
Tel: 04-9600 600 Fax: 04-9600 509  
Email: [geopark@lada.gov.my](mailto:geopark@lada.gov.my) Website: [www.langkawigeopark.com.my](http://www.langkawigeopark.com.my)

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Feedback at [apen.media2@gmail.com](mailto:apen.media2@gmail.com)





## Royal Patron



### ROYAL PATRON

*Tunku Puteri Intan Safinaz  
Tuanku Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah*

**T**he Princess of Kedah, Tunku Puteri Intan Safinaz Tuanku Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah, has graciously consented to accept the invitation from the Langkawi Development Authority (LADA) to be the Royal Patron of Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark.

Her support has raised the stature of Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark (LUGG) with an enviable royal status and her high commitment has brought a refreshing face to all important geopark events that were staged.

Tunku Puteri Intan Safinaz, bestowed the royal title of Temenggong Kedah, has taken a keen interest in LUGG affairs and pledged her precious time to grace geopark events especially this year when LUGG celebrates its 10th anniversary.

LUGG is the oldest Geopark in South East Asia.

As a great supporter, Tunku Puteri Intan Safinaz has motivated Geopark staff in LADA in its mission to promote and preserve LUGG. Recently, the princess was on hand to grace the Second Asia Pacific Geoparks Network regional training course and officiated at its opening. The course was held between May 8 and May 12 in Langkawi.

At the event where LADA Chief Executive Officer Dato Haji Azizan Noordin, Geopark and Conservation Division Manager Azmil Munif Mohd Bukhari and 70 geopark delegates were present, she shared her views.

"This gathering is a reflection of the growing interest and development of geoparks in the Asia Pacific region as the new tool for regional sustainable development.



"I am extremely supportive of the efforts, activities, and commitment shown by the managers and stakeholders to accelerate the geopark development in this region. This workshop is a good example of how geopark becomes a tool for best practices in managing natural and cultural heritage," Tunku Puteri Intan Safinaz said.

In her speech, Tunku Puteri Intan lauded Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark for taking the lead to share knowledge on geopark governance and management and showcasing examples of activities that reflect how science is translated into action.

She said the sharing of knowledge has empowered local communities of Kilim and Kubang Badak mangrove areas in managing their geo-heritage resources as part of the geo-tourism initiatives that underlie how geopark helps the local community to reap economic benefits from geopark development to uplift their quality of life and strengthen the sense of belonging.

Tunku Puteri Intan Safinaz has also attended the inaugural Langkawi Classic Car Show showcasing some 50 selected vintage and classic cars under one roof at the Mahsuri International Exhibition Centre (MIEC) in April.

Langkawians will surely see more of Tunku Puteri Intan Safinaz gracing the many exciting events lined up this year to celebrate the 10th anniversary.



## Message

Advisor of

# Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark

*Professor Ibrahim Komoo*



**L**angkawi UNESCO Global Geopark is a testament to the conscious and tireless efforts undertaken by Langkawi Development Authority to preserve the natural beauty and aesthetic value of Langkawi's geological landscape that it has been endowed with.

I see a planned roadmap that engages the local community, local authority and industry stakeholders in preserving the natural and cultural heritage of this archipelago of 99 islands.

The noteworthy efforts and dedication of Langkawi Development Authority (LADA) is commendable. LADA has not only met but capable of maintaining its UNESCO Global Geopark components in a sustainable manner.

I urge Langkawians to take ownership of the UNESCO Global Geopark status they possess. They must always remind themselves that the UNESCO status is coveted because the aim of a geopark is about promoting sustainable development of the region by preserving valuable geological heritages and making use of them in education, science and tourism.

Within the 478sq kilometer of land in Langkawi, which is established as the oldest landmass in Malaysia, are found more than 90 geosites of outstanding values that require protection and can be used for tourism products. Currently, only three geoforest parks have been fully developed, namely Machinchang Cambrian, Kilim Karst and Dayang Bunting Marble.

For the local people, the potential for growth is tremendous in the coming years. The well-maintained natural beauty of Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark will attract many tourists to visit and bring about economic spillovers that will benefit the local economy for all and sundry.

By now, all of us should know that a Geopark is not just about rock and its formation. It can be a outstanding and thriving landscape with its integrated biological, cultural and geological heritage that promises a great future for Langkawi.

Here's where this Geopark Gazette can be helpful to disseminate information about the significance of the endorsement of UNESCO that recognises Langkawi as the first Southeast Asia global geopark.

This e-magazine can play a meaningful role in educating and promoting the merits of sustainable practices to preserve a Global Geopark as a legacy for the younger generations to come.

### Prof Emeritus/ Principal Fellow

*Institute for Environment and Development (LESTARI) UKM*

**Vice President,**  
Global Geoparks Network (GGN)

**Coordinator,**  
Asia Pacific Geoparks Network (APGN)

**Council,**  
UNESCO Global Geoparks Advisor,  
Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark



## Foreword



# Langkawi Development Authority

## *Chief Executive Officer Dato' Haji Azizan Noordin*

**L**angkawi is an island paradise that has earned its stripes as one of the world's best beach destinations.

In the days to come, this archipelago of 99 islands will attain yet another accolade as a luxury travel destination and take its rightful place on the world tourism map.

Vogue Magazine has listed Langkawi as the 3rd hottest tourism destination for this year. It is a highly rated international magazine that defines the culture of fashion and lifestyle for a global audience.

Langkawi has come under the magazine editor's purview after two famous brands; St Regis and Ritz Carlton landed in Langkawi. St Regis is a luxury 5-star resort with 85 suites and 4 over-water villas that has since its opening on 6 April 2016 won many coveted international awards and accolades.

The other is Ritz Carlton Resort with 90-room, 30-villa property with a destination spa and slated to open later this year. The plan is to turn Langkawi into the preferred island resort that will be the playground of the rich and fabulous.

In this respect, the thrust of the Langkawi Tourism Blueprint 2.0 for 2016-2020 period will be skewed towards turning Langkawi into a high-end tourism destination.

In line with this is the plan to tap the potential of bringing in more tourists to Langkawi through joint collaboration between Tourism Malaysia and several leading global airlines such as Etihad Airways, Emirates Airlines, Qatar Airways and Singapore Airlines.



Through these collaborations, I hope to get more high-end tourists from Europe, United States, Australia and New Zealand. Apart from such scheduled flights, LADA has intensified its promotion of chartered flights to Langkawi.

Langkawi will also leverage on its billing as a renowned ecotourism destination to attract big corporations to use the island for international meetings, incentives, conventions and exhibitions (MICE). There are a number of 5 and 6-star rated hotels to accommodate large-scale meetings, seminars and conferences.

To intensify tourism promotion overseas, LADA will utilize social media platforms to help publicise and promote Langkawi especially its UNESCO Global Geopark status.

The publication of the e-magazine, Geopark Gazette, is timely to showcase Langkawi as a dynamic and living geopark to the world.

While the role of the gazette is as a chronicler of the achievements of Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark, its main role should be as a medium of communication.

Implicit in this is the responsibility to pass on messages to the audience, which is the local residents and stakeholders such as LADA itself, the Federal and State Government and more importantly, tourism players.

The gazette will serve as a market place for the exchange of ideas that will seek to achieve two objectives; to improve ranking of Langkawi as a world tourism destination and to sustain its status as a Global Geopark.

I am well aware of the remarkable achievement Langkawi has made and the progress that this Global Geopark, the first in Malaysia and Southeast Asia, is heading.

Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark is, for me, a key success in marketing Langkawi.

The slew of attractions such as new bio-geo features and geo-trails will attract more tourists to visit our 99 enchanting and magical islands.

Every success story has its humble beginning and here I would to commend my predecessors for the achievements that has made this beloved island of ours what it is today.

I am confident that Langkawi's standing will soar like the Brahminy Kite eagle, the iconic emblem of the legendary island of Langkawi, guarding the sky above.

With the niche advantage of Global Geopark status, Langkawi at the north-west tip of Peninsular Malaysia has gained international recognition not just as a paradise island but a choice destination for MICE and luxury travel.

A sustainable geopark, like ours, is eco-friendly, green and responsible.

This is our Naturally Langkawi!



## Remarks

### Deputy Chief Executive Officer

Langkawi Development Authority - *Ahmad Zaini Zaba'ai*

**Welcome to Naturally Langkawi the oldest land in Malaysia.**

Langkawi is drawing tourists from far and near because of the sun, sea and sand and also the unique rock formations and the billion-year old drop-stones that have been discovered here.

Comparatively, it is the most accessible UNESCO Global Geopark to visit, simply because the geopark covers the whole archipelago of 99 islands. Langkawi is the 52nd UNESCO Global Geopark in the world apart from being the first in Southeast Asia. Today, the number has doubled to 120 UNESCO Global Geoparks in 33 countries.

As the governing authority, Langkawi Development Authority is doing its utmost to ensure easy connectivity by air and sea that will bring in more tourists to visit to enjoy the island's pristine beaches and geoforests.

It is our vision to turn the island into an irresistible eco-tourism destination that will be in your bucket's list of places to visit.

Rated as the top 10 tourist destinations in the world, Langkawi has world-class tourist products for tourists to take part in, namely enchanting island-hopping cruises, thrilling ride on the steepest cable car and exhilarating walk on a hanging sky bridge, which is the first of its kind in the world.

The rich history and culture and, of course, its traditional food are waiting to whet your curiosity. The eco-tourism attractions and geological marvels are what make Langkawi a preferred tropical paradise.

Tourists now have over 200 hotels to stay in, 50 attractions to enjoy and 100



shopping outlets for duty-free shopping in Langkawi.

The publication of the Geopark Gazette, an e-magazine, fills the void in conveying relevant information of tourism attractions in the global geopark to tourists and also tourism stakeholders.

The e-magazine is easily available online. In this digital IT age, it is a more pervasive way to capture the eyeballs of Gen Y, the future generation.

The articles featured within are good reading providing insights into the many aspects of Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark including its unique cuisine, culture and history.

Happy reading! Naturally Langkawi!



### Geopark and Community Development Division Manager

*Azmil Munif Mohd Bukhari*

**This Geopark Gazette aims to serve as a conduit for the flow and exchange of information on all things Geopark.**

The inaugural issue chronicles the significant tourism activities that have happened in Langkawi, provides a list of what's coming up in the coming months and serve as a guide for visitors wanting to know more.

Many a tourist has often requested to be taken to a geopark shortly after they arrived in Langkawi. Their faces beamed up with a look of amazement when told that they were already in the Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark the moment they stepped onto the tarmac at the Langkawi International Airport.

The gazette has separate sections for easy reference; for example, information on new geo-sites such as Kubang Badak and Pulau Tuba and their eco-tourism attractions, and another on the community's engagement to conserve its geopark heritage as well as involvement in sustainable development that enhances their livelihood.

This gazette hopes to serve as a platform to bridge the gap in information on Geopark for our visitors and also for the sharing of ideas from stakeholders such as tourism players, the local community and the local authorities.

It also covers the plans by LADA to bring in more tourists to Langkawi by targeting different market segments such as MICE, eco-tourism and luxury travel.

This e-magazine is available for download at [www.langkawi-geopark.com.my](http://www.langkawi-geopark.com.my) and Facebook @langkawiglobalgeopark.

Naturally Langkawi

# MAHSURI A LEGEND

## and the burnt rice, a true story

### THE LEGEND

In the late 18th century, a beauty of Siamese descent named Mahsuri lived on a northern island called Langkawi off the Malay Peninsular.

She was falsely accused of being unfaithful to her Malay warrior husband. She was innocent, a victim of jealousy; but nobody believed her, she was then tied to a tree and was to die by stabbing as punishment.

But magically, nothing could pierce her flesh. She then revealed that only her family dagger or 'keris', could harm her. So when the keris pierced her, she bled white blood - the proof of her innocence.

Before her last breath, Mahsuri cursed Langkawi with bad luck for seven generations. Since then, the island saw calamity after calamity. Crops failed and the island was attacked by forces from the neighbouring Kingdom of Siam for many decades.



### THE CURSE ENDS

Only in the late 20th century, after the "cursed" seven generations had supposedly passed, Langkawi's fate began to take a positive turn. It began to grow and flourish as a tourist destination.

For years following that, the Mahsuri legend, the Burnt Rice and Langkawi's natural beauty like its beaches were the main selling point for the island's tourism. The duty-free status since 1987 also attracted visitors for shopping sprees to buy cheaper chocolates, kitchenware and liquor.

Today, Langkawi - still a land of legend and folklore - is known throughout the world as Southeast Asia's first UNESCO Global Geopark, a site where prehistoric earth movements gave birth to Malaysia and where nature thrives together with the local community.

Mahsuri's tomb is located at Jalan Makam Mahsuri, Kampung Mawat, Mukim Ulu Melaka. It is about 17km from the International Airport at Padang Matsirat and takes about 20 minutes by car from the airport.

Beras Terbakar is in Kampung Raja in Padang Matsirat, also about 17km from Kuah town.

### TRUE EVENT

When a battle broke out at the Pancur Straits in 1821, Langkawi's army chief Dato Kemboja knew that the Siamese would capture the island, so he sent a messenger to Padang Matsirat - Langkawi's main rice growing district - to tell villagers to collect their paddy harvest and burn them.

The villagers gathered their harvest in Kampung Raja, threw all the paddy into a pit dug in a field and burned everything so the invading army will have no source of food. It was meant to thwart the Siamese invasion but Langkawi still fell to Siam.

In another version of the burnt rice story, it was the Siamese who burned the rice. The local villagers had hidden their paddy harvest in an underground cellar and poisoned wells to kill the invaders.

In retaliation, the Siamese razed the village, burning everything including the underground cellar.

Until today, people can still find traces of the burnt rice in Padang Matsirat in the compound of the home of Ku Halim Ku Hassan. The pit is no longer there but there is a sign reading "Beras Terbakar" (burnt rice) that indicates where it was.



## Clash of the Two Mountains

Once upon a time, two mythical giants Mat Chincang and Mat Raya had a fight at their children's wedding reception.

Mat Raya was angry when he caught Mat Chincang's son, who was marrying his daughter, looking at other women during the wedding.

This led the two in-laws to quarrel and threw a pan ('periuk') and a pot ('belanga') at each other, spilling gravy all over the floor.

A third giant Mat Sawar intervened to stop the fight, and the two fathers then realised their mistake and felt ashamed. To make up for their mistake, they turned into mountains.

Mat Chincang became Gunung (Mount) Machincang, a sandstone mountain that exhibits peculiar 'scars' as if it was 'chopped'. The word for 'chop' in Malay is 'cincang' and as the old story goes, the scars were the result of Mat Chincang's fight with Mat Raya.

Mat Raya became Gunung Raya, the highest peak on Langkawi at 881m above sea level.

Mat Sawar became a hill called Bukit Sawar that stands between Machincang in the western part of Langkawi and Gunung Raya that is almost in the centre of the island, playing peacekeeper for all eternity.



The aftermath of the clash between the two giants also formed the basis of names given to other places on Langkawi.

The land where the pot fell and broke became Kampung Belanga Pecah, which literally means village of the broken pot.

The place where the gravy had spilled over came to be known as 'Kuah', which is the name of the island's town, while the name 'Kisap' was given to the location where the ground absorbed the gravy.

Interestingly, the place where the wedding ring fell during the commotion was named 'Tanjung Cincin' (Cape of the Ring).

Langkawi is a Land of Myth and Legends. Its beautiful natural landscape and attractions come with stories of mythical beings and magic.

The most arresting of all tales is Princess Mahsuri and the Seven Generations of Curse she laid on Langkawi after being condemned to death for adultery although innocent.

Today, as an UNESCO Global Geopark, Langkawi has other bio-geo heritage stories to tell.





## THE LANGKAWI STORY: A SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DESTINATION

**Tell-tale dropstones found deposited here by migrating glaciers or icebergs provided the evidence that Langkawi was once part of Gondwanaland, an ancient continent, and had moved up from the South Pole eons ago.**



**A**nother discovery, rocks in Gunung Machinchang are found embedded with fossils of trilobites, an ancient creature, that has been carbon-dated to 550 million years old making Langkawi the oldest landmass in South East Asia.

Langkawi is a geologist's treasure trove and a history book of the earth formation of the past.

Concerted efforts have been undertaken to conserve Langkawi, a UNESCO Global Geopark, and to turn this island into a sustainable tourism destination.

Geopark is not just about rock formations. It includes the living local community that is engaged in sustainable development. Community involvement in the opening of geo-trail within a geopark is the key element of a thriving and living geopark. New geo-trail will attract visitors to come and turn the whole geopark into a sustainable tourism destination.

Langkawi, an archipelago of 99 islands at the northwest tip of Peninsular Malaysia, is the first UNESCO Global Geopark in Southeast Asia. It is a unique showcase of geological significance that for geologists Langkawi has become a must-visit field location.

"Langkawi is much like Mecca for a geologist. One can never call himself a geologist if he had not studied the rocks in Langkawi," so says Professor Emeritus Ibrahim Komoo, the Vice Chair of UNESCO Global Geoparks Networks.

Geopark is the current tourism buzzword and fast becoming the embodiment of ecotourism the world over.

An awakening of interest spiked after the successes of many Global Geoparks in China within the past 10 years attracting over six million visitors yearly and generating about RM300 million in annual revenue each.

Prof Ibrahim recalled an incident where a dozen Chinese experts had gathered around him with many questions on how to seek geopark recognition after his talk during the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro a decade ago. Today, China has over 100 national Geoparks and among them 35 have gone on to attain UNESCO Global Geopark status.

### Model Geopark

Langkawi is highly regarded as a 'model geopark' on how the geopark is best managed under the aegis of Langkawi Development Authority (LADA) after the latter's success in securing the second renewal of its geopark status in 2015.



A living geopark is seen in the involvement of the local community. Their active participation is seen in the numerous economic activities they indulged in that have enhanced their livelihood.

LADA has set up a Geopark and Conservation Division to manage the geopark in 2007 the year it secured geopark status. It is adequately funded, as LADA is a statutory body with annual allocation provided by the Federal Government.

The immense contribution of Prof Ibrahim has been acknowledged in his appointment as the advisor of Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark for five years until 2019. Under his stewardship, the management of the geopark here is in good hands.

## How it all started

Prof Ibrahim's research was instrumental in Langkawi succeeding to obtain the geopark status a decade ago.

The milestone year was 2006 when the Kedah Government officially set up Langkawi Geopark. A year later in 2007, Langkawi Geopark was accepted into the Global Geoparks Network. Subsequently, other countries looking to establish their own geoparks consulted Langkawi to learn how things are done.



UNESCO Global Geopark inspectors – Pablo Rivas Palomo from Spain and Pasquale Li Puma (Italy) - visited Langkawi for the second evaluation exercise in August 2015.

"We have taught others how to set up geoparks because Langkawi is the first geopark in South East Asia in 2006. Japan, Indonesia, Korea, Thailand, and Vietnam came to us to study how to prepare their submissions to UNESCO.

"We were the teacher. Even today, people still consult us," said Datuk Kamarulzaman Abdul Ghani, the former LADA general manager to whom Prof Ibrahim presented his proposal to set up Langkawi Geopark.

His passion for Langkawi Geopark prompted him to set up a non-governmental organisation called Friends of Langkawi Geopark (FLAG) in 2013. FLAG serves as a watchdog and also support the efforts of LADA in conserving the geopark in 2013.

The role it played in promoting Geopark conservation complemented LADA's own initiatives. UNESCO inspectors who visited in August 2015 were satisfied with the efforts put in by LADA in implementing sustainable development that engages the local community and other stakeholders.

The inspectors were impressed. LADA passed its litmus test, securing the second renewal of the Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark status which is valid for another four years until 2019.

## Geopark Reference Centre

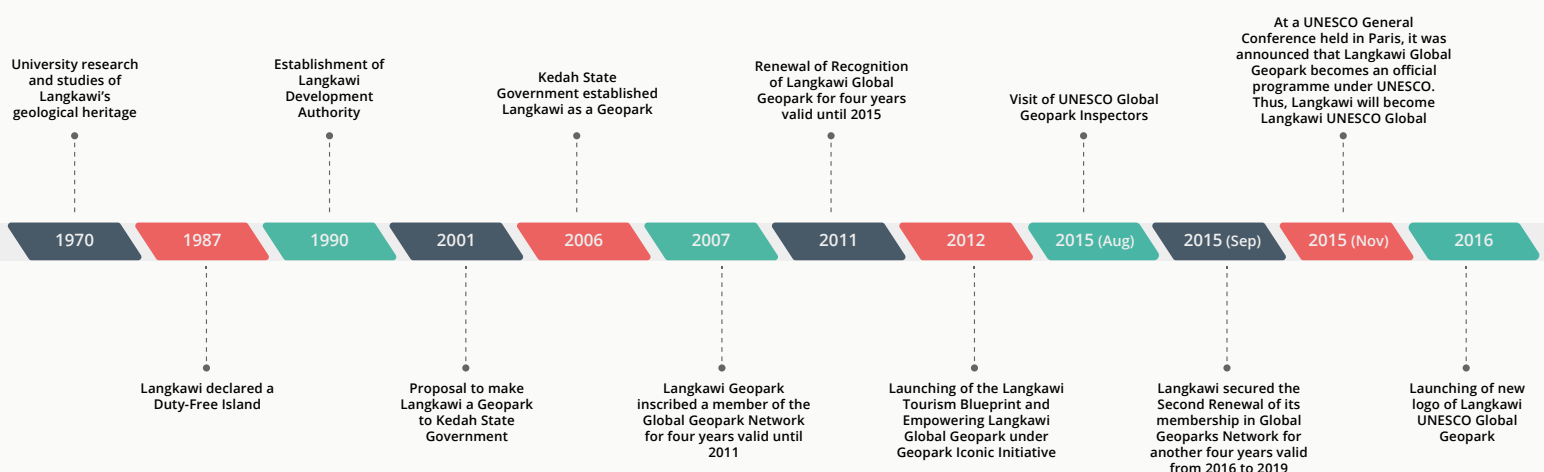
In 2015, UNESCO agreed to make Langkawi a Geopark Reference Centre for Southeast Asia to assist other foreign groups from South Korea, Japan, Vietnam, and Indonesia wanting to create geoparks in their respective countries.

The Geopark Reference Centre would function by providing training at the Langkawi Research Centre or via exposure trips for geopark aspiring groups.

To promote tourism, LADA is planning to develop a Geopark Discovery Centre for locals and tourists to get to know more of what a Geopark stands for.

Another bigger plan is the move to make Langkawi the country's first low-carbon island by 2030.

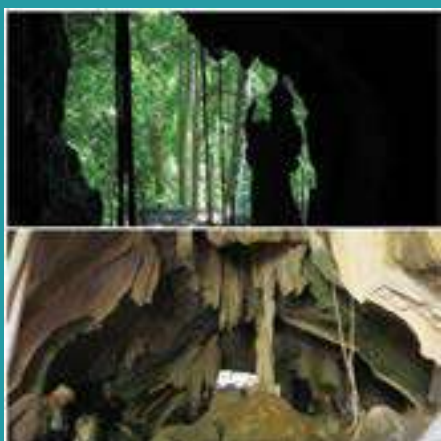
## Timeline of Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark



# PULAU TUBA

**P**ulau Tuba - Langkawi's third largest island located 5km and 20 minutes by boat from Kuah - is home to a sleepy traditional fishing village with a population of about 4,000.

Today, the island is transforming into a new tourist destination with its own unique attractions.



*Wang Buloh Cave with 'Praying Man' or 'Goddess of Mercy' stalagmites.*

## Tourism Promoted Geosites



*Limestones bedrocks and tell-tale rock formations*

Among them are the Wang Buloh Cave where visitors will find stalagmites and stalactites of curious shapes like one that has been dubbed the 'Praying Man' for resembling a person praying.

To Buddhists, this stalagmite looks like the Goddess of Mercy or Kuan Yin.

"We were having a clean-up programme on the island once when we saw five buses taking people to the cave. We saw visitors praying to the rock formation," Geopark ranger Zamzuri Ramli says.

"We were taken aback too. Then we heard that the figure also looks like the figure of Kuan Yin."

For those interested in geology, Pulau Tuba features limestone

bedrocks and tell-tale rock formations caused by tectonic earth movements, and wetlands.

The Bat Cave, or Gua Kelawar on the island also showcases limestone formations. Its cave walls also 'exhibit' ancient oyster shells that are embedded in them.

These features at various geosites on the island make great scenic locations for visitors to take photographs while they enjoy their serene surroundings.

Another beautiful location is an inland lake that is the roosting place for migrating egrets. The place makes a great picnic spot.

For the fit and adventurous, the peak of Pulau Tuba can be reached by hiking. The climb takes only 90 minutes.



### Tuba Trail Run

For long distance runners, the island is also becoming the sports venue. Pulau Tuba hosted the inaugural 2016 Tuba Trail Run that went for 30km in April.

Not fully-developed, Pulau Tuba also gives visitors the chance to see how the small island community go about their simple lives in their humble 'virgin village' and co-exist harmoniously with the local wildlife and natural environment.

The locals still rely on the sea for their livelihoods. They also farm and go into the forest to collect herbs, wild fruits, wax and honey. The women are skilled in weaving with pandan and coconut leaves.

As tourism in Langkawi grows, locals and entrepreneurs from outside Langkawi are seeing the potential of making Pulau Tuba a new destination for visitors.

Infrastructures are being improved and there are now homestay programmes offered by locals and hotels like Nadias Hotel that recently built its new property



*Weaving workshop for local folks*



*Pulau Tuba Jetty*

Nadias Villa on the island, giving high-end tourists a private beachfront getaway on Pantai Pasir Panjang; and the Tuba Beach Resort.

The resort next to the longest fishermen's jetty in Kedah offers guests a spectacular view of the open sea, the sunrise, activities like fishing and hunting for shellfish and crabs, kayaking and bicycling.

In a moonless night, visitors can try squid scooping, oyster picking. Anglers can choose between fishing in open waters at hidden fishing sites like

'Unjam-unjam' and fishing from a platform.

During the low tide, molluscs and a type of sea cucumber called 'beronok' can be found in the shallow waters of Batu Reban. Locals make a special kerabu (salad) by mixing the beronok with other ingredients.

Visitors can also catch hermit crabs under trees, in bushes or the seabed; go jungle-trekking and watch eagles, otters and monitor lizards. Firefly watching is an activity to enjoy by night.



## TANJUNG MALI

## THE CAPE THAT HOLDS MALAYSIA'S EARTH HISTORY

1 billion years old drop stone

Several drop stones as small as a clenched fist and boulders that were embedded in sedimentary rocks are recent findings of geological significance in Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark.

The location of the drop stones is marked by signboards; one at The Cliff Restaurant and another on the other side of the cape.

The immediate area on the high tide part of rocks near the sea is a protected area. LADA Geopark and Conservation Division is encouraging a developer building a resort nearby the drop stones to take up ownership as joint stakeholders from the private sector in preserving the important findings.



These drop stones in Tanjung Mali show the significance of Langkawi in our earth's history. These drop stones are 1 billion years old and showed Langkawi is the oldest landmass in Malaysia.

To the uninitiated, these findings are nothing more than rocks by the sea. You bet you won't be able to identify them at all until they are pointed out to you.

To geologists, they are definitely a wonder. To those who appreciate natural beauty and geological heritage, it is reason enough to preserve and protect Tanjung Mali and its geological heritage as part of our country's legacy.





# KUBANG BADAK AN EXCITING GEOSITE

13 amazing trails @ bio-geosite



**M**angrove swamps, old charcoal kiln ruins, fossil finds, a bat cave and eagles - the White-Bellied Sea Eagle and Brahminy Kite - and undersea geysers are among the 13 geo-trails there.

The name of this geosite is a misnomer - a watering hole for hippo where none is found anywhere near - and herein lies its allure.

This place has a unique cultural community - Siamese villagers who once produced charcoals from the abundant supply of mangrove with now abandoned kilns - and bio-geo features that set it apart from the other geo-sites within the larger Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark.

At its river mouth, visitors on a boat can take in the panoramic view of the 490 hectare Kubang Badak

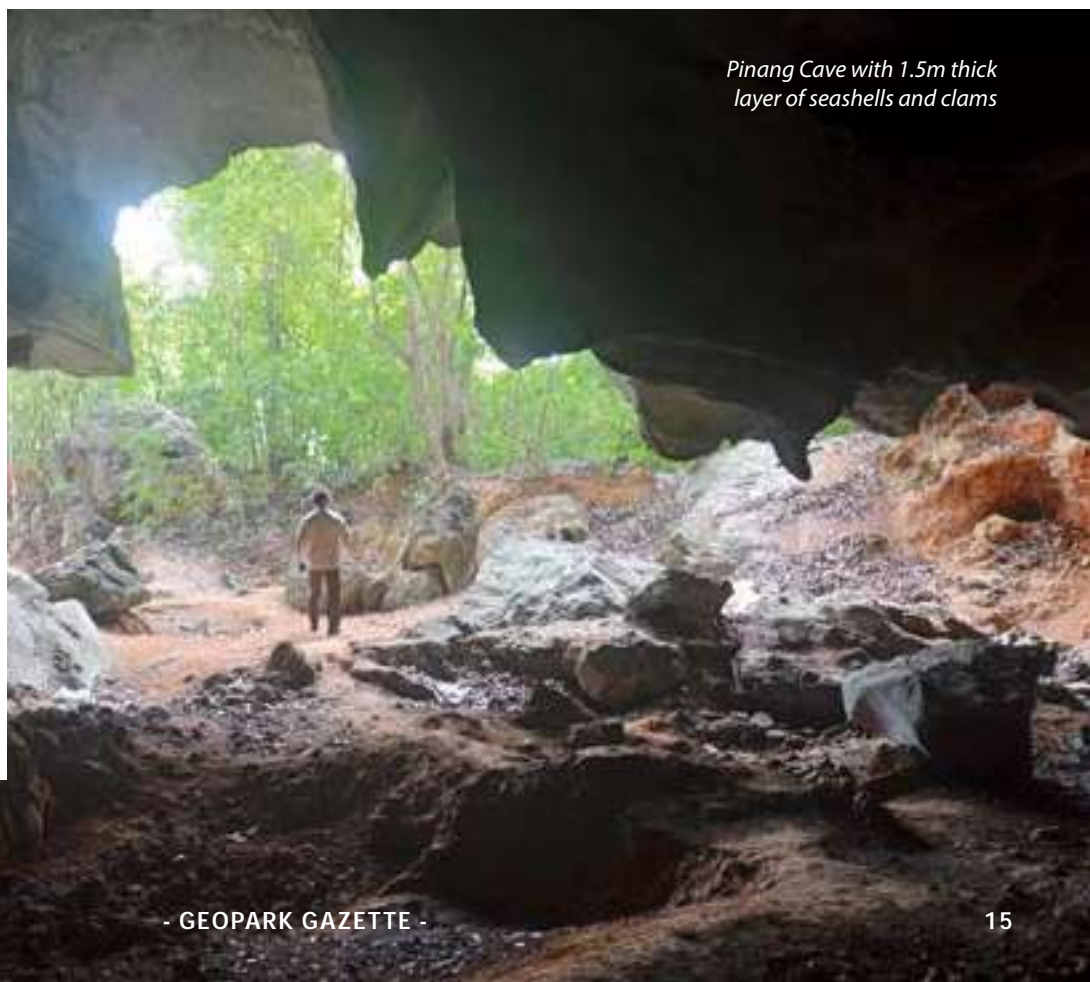
**Kubang Badak is being promoted as a new bio geosite in Langkawi and a new discovery that holds the key to unlocking the full potential of the island for high-end tourists.**

mangrove swamps and mudflats in front, the limestone karst of Kilim on the left and the captivating Machinchang Cambrian Geoforest Park on the right.

On nearby Jemuruk Island is found fossils of million-year old trilobites, a fossilised extinct marine arthropod; Dangli Island with its rich marine life and corals; and

Tanjung Buta with mudflats, white quartz and trails for nature-lovers.

Near to the limestone karst is the Pinang Cave that stinks with guano from discharges from the thousands of fruit bats hanging inside and tell-tale signs of a 1.5-metre thick layer of seashells and clams that showed the level of the sea was once 20 metres down.



*Pinang Cave with 1.5m thick layer of seashells and clams*





Kubang Badak Arch

More on biodiversity are the small Fiddler Crabs on the river banks and abandoned charcoal kilns that were large enough to hold over 1,000 sticks at one time.

With its bio-geo heritage and cultural attractions, Kubang Badak is perhaps the perfect choice as a high-end tourist destination that is actively being promoted by the Langkawi Development Authority.

To visit the geosite, look out for the big arch on the roadside that leads into the Kubang Badak fishermen's jetty off Jalan Teluk Yu. It is about 30 minutes from Kuah or Pantai Cenang on the opposite direction.



Kubang Badak  
Fisherman's Jetty



## DAYANG BUNTING MARBLE GEOFOREST PARK

**The 44sq km Dayang Bunting Marble Geoforest Park is made up of Pulau Dayang Bunting or Island of the Pregnant Maiden, and Pulau Tuba. With a name like that in Langkawi, it only means the island located south of the main island has a legend of its own.**

**T**his one is a fairy tale that tells of the love and tragedy of Mat Teja, the genie; and his wife Mambang Sari, the beautiful sprite.

Mat Teja fell in love with Mambang Sari when he saw her frolic at the Teluk Lawak cove. Worried that Mambang Sari would not return his affections, he used magic - wiping his face with the tears of a mermaid - and the sprite fell for him immediately.

The couple married and soon expected a child. During her pregnancy, Mambang Sari visited the lake now known as Tasik Dayang Bunting (Lake of the Pregnant Maiden). She soon gave birth to a son but the baby died seven days later.

In her grief, Mambang Sari laid her dead child to rest in the deep lake. It is believed that the baby then turned into a white crocodile that protected the lake and would only appear to people who were pure of heart.

Since then, villagers believed that the fresh water lake was blessed by Mambang Sari and contained magical healing properties that could make barren women, who drank from it, fertile.

The lake, created when underground caves collapsed and separated from the sea by just a thin strip of rocks, is in the centre of the island and surrounded by tropical rainforests. It is said that from an angle, the hills that form the backdrop of the lake look like the silhouette of a pregnant woman lying on her back.

Fairy tale aside, the Dayang Bunting Marble Geoforest Park is made largely of Permian marble overthrust by the older Setul formation limestone. These fine marbles were formed out of limestones, following the changes of climate and pressure over hundreds of millions of years.

The geoforest park also has Pulau Tepor with its dropstones of a billion years old. Dropstones are isolated rocks geologically different from their surroundings, meaning they were carried from a distant area and then dropped in place by a melting glacier or iceberg. This also means the land that created Langkawi was once very close to the ancient Great Continent of Gondwanaland that was near the South Pole.

Pulau Tepor also has a crescent-shaped bay believed to be the result of a meteorite crash some 10 million years ago.

Other geosites include Pulau Ular (Snake Island), where the rare sand mangrove (*Rhizophora Stylosa*) tree grows; Pulau Lima and Pulau Dua, where ancient limestone rocks emerged from the sea with caverns filled with stalactites.

The Setul formation limestone Wang Buluh Cave on Pulau Tuba, which is part of the geoforest park, is another interesting geosite. It has uniquely shaped stalactites like one dubbed 'Praying Man' because it looks like a person praying. Buddhists say it looks like the Goddess of Mercy.



*A couple of tourists enjoying the scenic Dayang Bunting lake while pedaling on a boat to move around.*



*Tourists while island hopping on a boat at Pulau Dayang Bunting greeted by Brahminy Kite eagles, the iconic symbol of Langkawi.*



# KILIM KARST

## GEOFOREST PARK

**T**he 83sq km Kilim Karst Geoforest Park at the northeastern part of Langkawi is home to the oldest limestone formation in Malaysia.

Among its most notable features are the beautiful vertical and surrounded limestone hills. Some look like pinnacles rising above the dense mangrove forest - a result of erosion over millions of years.

There are also important geosites in this area. The highest sea level found in Southeast Asia is here at Teluk Cina Mati (Cape of Dead Chinese) on Pulau Tanjung Dendang, indicated by wave-cut notches with fossilised gastropods, barnacles and corals that date back to about 7,000 years ago.

The highest among the wave-cut notches is at 23m above sea level - meaning 7,000 years ago, the seafloor was at this level, which is the highest measured difference in sea-level height recorded anywhere in the region.

The Bat Cave (Gua Kelawar) at the Kilim River is home to three species



Fish farm

of insect-eating bats but what make it a geosite are the 5,000-year-old seashells embedded in its walls. This indicates that the cave was once underwater.

Curtain Cave (Gua Langsir), also at the Kilim River has an interesting tale. Locals believed the cave was haunted and avoided it. The cave is also called Gua Langsir in Malay. The word 'langsir' means curtain. It is said that the cave earned the name from the stalactites that look like curtains.

Visitors often tour this geoforest park that is rich in flora and fauna on boats that cruise along the river mouth flanked by mangrove forests. There are 104 different species of mangrove trees out of the 119 in the world in Kilim alone.

There are also fish farms to visit and the Brahminy Kite and White-Bellied Sea Eagles to watch as the majestic birds of prey circle above the waters seeking food.



Kilim is not without attractions buried deep in myths and legends like many other places in Langkawi. At Tanjung Rhu, it has the sea-facing Cave of Stories (Gua Cherita) with stalactites and stalagmite formations, and more than one legend associated to it.

The main legend tells how the Garuda - a mythical bird in Hinduism and Buddhism - tried to foil the marriage of a Roman prince and a Chinese princess because the union of the two empires would be detrimental to smaller kingdoms. Garuda kidnapped the princess and hid her in the cave. It is said there is a rock formation there that resembles a sleeping princess.

Another story tells of Sang Gede-m-bai, a female giant with the power to turn anything to stone. It is said that she visited the cave thousands of years ago and took a liking to it. She wanted to move in but the cave inhabitants refused to move out for her, so she turned them into stone.

# MACHINCHANG CAMBRIAN

## GEOFOREST PARK



*SkyCab cable car station on top of Mount Machinchang.*

**T**he Machinchang Cambrian Geoforest Park in northwestern Langkawi is the 43sq km home of the 550 million-year-old Machinchang Formation, the oldest rock formation in South-east Asia that gives the island one of its most beautiful landscapes.

It is home to Mount Machinchang, the second highest peak on Langkawi at 700m above sea level.

According to legend, the mountain was transformed from the giant Mat Chinchang after he regretted his fight with his in-law, Mat Raya, who also turned himself into a mountain named Mount Raya out of remorse.

Legend has it that Machinchang looks like a "chopped up" mountain because of the injuries Mat Chinchang suffered in his quarrel with Mat Raya, but geologists tell a different story.

It is due to the resistance of the rocks against tectonic deformation that the ancient sandstone mountain, which rose from the sea hundreds of millions of years ago, looks like it was chopped up.

The geoforest park has important geosites - Teluk Datai, where the oldest grains of sand are found; Pantai Pasir Tengkorak, where the old continent was submerged and features of sedimentary structures can be seen; Tanjung Buta and Teluk Jemuruk, were areas where trilobite and brachiopod fossils are found; and Tanjung Sabung, where limestone succeeds sandstone.

A playground for geologists, the geoforest park is also a premier tourist destination with attractions like the Langkawi SkyBridge, the longest curved suspension bridge in Southeast Asia at 708m above sea level.

Machinchang also has the popular SkyCab cable car - the longest free span single rope cable car in Malaysia at 2.2km long. The cable car ascends almost 710m above sea level to give visitors a stunning 360 degree view of Langkawi, the Andaman Sea and the Thai Tarutao Island from its station on top of Mount Machinchang. It also holds the record as one of the steepest cable car rides in the world at a steep 42-degree gradient.

At the cable car station at the foot of the mountain is the Oriental Village that has souvenir shops, spas, restaurants, deer farm, animal petting corner and other tourist attractions.

Also within the geoforest park is the picturesque Temurun Waterfall and Telaga Tujuh (Seven Wells) Waterfall. There is now a new zipline attraction in the geoforest park that lets more adventurous visitors 'fly' from tree to tree and across the valley above Seven Wells.



*SkyCab cable car ascends almost 710m above sea level.*



*Lighthouse at Telaga Harbour*



# LANGKAWI UPSCALE TO LUXURY TRAVEL

*The St. Regis has opened the country's first all-suite resort in Langkawi.*

Vogue Magazine has acknowledged it. Langkawi ranks third as the magazine's top 10 hottest travel destinations for 2017.

Coming from an international fashion and lifestyle magazine that defines the culture of fashion and lifestyle, it is a verification of the island moving up the value chain.

Vogue's leadership and authority, as Wikipedia noted, derives from the brand's unique role as a cultural barometer for a global audience.

In its December 2016 issue, Vogue has vouched for Malaysia especially its pristine beaches as a top travel destination for its socialite readers. "While Malaysia's cuisine, art, architecture, and beaches are just as fantastic, Langkawi, an archipelago made up of 99 islands on Malaysia's west coast, is about to put the country on the travel map."

Read the article online at <http://www.vogue.com/13515667/top-travel-destinations-2017/>.

The magazine's choice can easily be explained in the latest development in Langkawi's hospitality industry. Several six-star resorts are planned for and this year at least two would have opened for business.

Quoting from Vogue, The St. Regis has opened the country's first all-suite resort here, complete with a Bill Bensley-designed restaurant and the largest swimmable lagoon on the island. Next summer (in April), the Ritz-Carlton is scheduled to open a 90-room, 30-villa property with a destination spa that will rival even Thailand's famous wellness retreats.

The same sentiment has been echoed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak that the opening luxury hotels such as The St Regis Langkawi is a boost for the reputation of the island resort particularly among upmarket tourists.

As Langkawi becomes more interna-

tionally known, other infrastructure developments will follow and this will pave the way for travel operators to bring high-income tourists to Langkawi.

Existing hotels in the same league are The Datai, The Andaman, Four Seasons Resort, Tanjung Rhu Resort, The Westin, Casa Del Mar and Vivanta by Taj Rebak Island.

Langkawi Development Authority CEO Datuk Azizan Noordin has said Tourism Malaysia is negotiating more collaboration with international airlines and inviting chartered flights to bring in high-income tourists to Langkawi from Europe, The United States, Australia and New Zealand.



*The Ritz Carlton, Langkawi is scheduled to open its door in July 2017*



## ENGAGING OTHER GEOPARKS

**G**lobal Geoparks are scattered across the planet but wide internet connectivity has made them borderless.

Nowadays, Geopark management bodies and players involved in the promotion of their local sites regularly share know-how and ideas by organising visits and keeping in touch online.

E-mails, Facebook and other online communication platforms like Skype have made it easier and cheaper for geoparks to connect across borders.

Langkawi has been working together with other Global Geoparks since 2008 to share knowledge and expertise on developing geoparks, is now using Skype to connect with Japan's Muroto UNESCO Global Geopark.

Both geoparks have been working together since 2013 in promotion, education and capacity building programmes.

In its communication with Muroto, Langkawi is represented by famous snake expert and naturalist Othman Ayeb, who is also its Geopark Ambassador, tour guide Indara Rahayu and geopark rangers.

The Japanese Global Geopark is represented by its Muroto Promotion Office staff and tour guides involved in promoting the geopark in the exchange.

The online communication programme with Muroto is Langkawi's first try and there are now plans to expand it to involve school children and the local community.



*Nature tour guide Osman Ayeb who is also Geopark Ambassador chatting with staff from Muroto UNESCO Global Geopark sharing information during video teleconferencing.*



*A group chat via skype video teleconferencing to share and exchange information with staff from Muroto UNESCO Global Geopark.*

Langkawi is Malaysia's only UNESCO Global Geopark. It is among 120 other UNESCO-listed Global Geoparks in 33 countries around the world.

Langkawi's closest geopark neighbours are Indonesia's Batur UNESCO Global Geopark and Gunung Sewu UNESCO Global Geopark.

# Nature Talk radio show

**C**ollaborating with local radio station Langkawi FM (104.8FM), the Langkawi Development Authority (LADA) engages the local community through the 'Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark Nature Talk' programme.

**Invited guest speakers - often local personalities - sit for one-hour interviews with the radio deejay, sharing their knowledge and expertise in their respective fields or professions.**

Since the beginning of the year, Nature Talk has featured interviews that directly and indirectly promoted the UNESCO Global Geopark, its colourful local community and its cultures, as well as geopark conservation and important events.

Most recently in November, the radio had on air LADA Deputy Chief Executive Officer Ahmad Zaini Zaba'ai and Geopark and Conservation Division Manager Azmil Munif Mohd Bukhari, who spoke about the November 5 Geopark Conservation Day 2016 event and its interesting programmes.

The month before, Langkawi FM interviewed traditional Malay and Islamic medical researcher Dr Abdul Ghani Hussain to learn the secret of herbs. The trained medical doctor, who is known as Dr Herb, shared with listeners his knowledge on herbs and their nutritional properties.



*Prof Ibrahim Komoo (left seated) and former LADA CEO Tan Sri Khalid Ramli at a Radio Show aired on Langkawi FM (104.8FM)*



*Pulau Tuba's Harapan Cultural Art Group playing with traditional musical instruments at a radio talk.*

He had shared that our snack 'Laksa' has all the ingredients for a healthy balanced meal.

In September, the radio spoke to the founders of 'Trash Hero' Ulrika Player and Rohizad on making Langkawi a clean and beautiful tourist destination and promoting volunteerism.

For the Nature Talk programme in August, the then LADA Chief Executive Officer Tan Sri Khalid Ramli spoke to listeners about the inaugural Langkawi Tourism Symposium 2016 that provided a platform for industry players to share their experience and address challenges in the global tourism industry.

The radio also aired the views of

members of the award-winning Langkawi Kampung Kilim Cooperative in June talking about how the geopark has helped the local community improve their livelihood.

In April, butterfly enthusiasts Selvam Raman and Ong Chiang Gaik shared both of their over 20-year-old love affair with the insects. They told listeners about the uniqueness of Langkawi that has over 500 butterfly species.

In February, the radio spoke to the players of Pulau Tuba's Harapan Cultural Art Group that regularly performs at government and non-governmental events. The uniqueness of this local music group is in its instruments that have been passed down for generations.



*Trash Hero Ulrika Player and her spouse Rohizad at a radio talk.*



*A Geopark guide briefing school children on why Langkawi has the oldest landmass in Malaysia during a field trip.*



*School children listening to LADA officers sharing the significance of geopark to the well-being of Langkawi.*



## Nurturing Geoparkians

**Children are the future. It is an over-used cliché but it is the truth.**

**T**he younger generations are the future custodians of Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark and it is good to start them young to begin to appreciate conservation and sustainability.

To facilitate these efforts, Geopark Ambassador Teh Cheng Chye, a retired school principal, initiated the setting up of the first Geopark Club in Langkawi early this year and subsequently more schools joined in.

Now, the Langkawi Development Authority (LADA) would invite Geopark Clubs to join programmes it organised for school children.

"The clubs will send their senior members or junior members to take part, depending on the level of the educational programmes designed by LADA to teach them about the geopark and why they must protect and preserve it.

The LADA programmes are geared towards preparing them for their working life. We can expect that in five or ten years' time, many of the children will be working in Langkawi, especially in the tourism and hospitality sectors.



*Geopark ambassador Teh Cheng Chye who initiated the setting up of the first geopark club speaking at a talk on geopark in LADA office.*

Teh says schools also expect their Geopark Club members - known as Geoparkians - to perform well academically, have discipline and good values.

"We expect them to be good communicators, who can speak English well. We want them to have empathy and the desire to help because they will be dealing with visitors.

"It is also important that they love nature, have interest in geology, and have ample knowledge in local cultures so they can present and promote Malaysian cultures to visitors.

"All these are important for Geoparkians if they are to be tour guides to promote Langkawi in the future," he says.

Teh says all schools now have Geopark Clubs, many re-branding

their previous Nature Clubs to reflect what Langkawi possesses.

The former principal of SMK Tunku Putra in Padang Matsirat says although he has retired from teaching six years ago, he is active in promoting school activities related to Geopark.

"In the past, every time LADA conducts programmes with schools, different groups of students or pupils would be selected to take part. It could be the Nature Club kids for one programme, and then the Geography Club kids for another.

"Now we have solved this lack of continuity and follow-ups when Geopark-related programmes are attended by Geoparkians. With the same kids taking part in the many programmes organised by LADA, they will learn better," he says.

# GEOPARK

## EDUCATIONAL CRUISE

**A**s a tourism operator himself, Alexander who owns yacht charter company and travel agency Tropical Charters, is helping to teach children about Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark and the importance of conserving nature.

One and a half years ago, his company introduced the Langkawi Geopark Educational Cruise that takes school children out for cruises on his yachts.

During the three-hour cruise, students and teachers get to listen to a guide tell them about the geopark and learn green practices like not using plastic bags and the importance of keeping the island's waterways clean.

"They learn how to be environmentally conscious while enjoying themselves on a cruise. They also have swimming sessions with our lifeguards watching over them and medics on standby," Alexander says.

The cruise for school kids was meant to be a one-off affair but when Tropical Charters received very good response for it, Alexander decided to keep the programme running as the company's Corporate Social Responsibility.

So far, his yachts have taken 1,800 children and 680 teachers out for the educational cruises to appreciate Langkawi's natural beauty, its geological and cultural heritage and to preserve and protect it.

"You would be surprised how many people in Langkawi have not been on a yacht. So the kids and teachers are really appreciative of the chance to sail.

"But we want to do this programme with schools because we need to teach our kids why the geopark is important. When they know and understand, they will

become junior rangers...they will not litter, they will champion green practices.

"The geopark is not just about green tourism or rocks. It is about community growth and the people's livelihood. The whole Geopark concept of Langkawi is about natural beauty, so we have to have balanced growth. When mother nature is happy, the community will be happy too."

The CSR programme is in high demand from schools from mainland Kedah, Kuala Lumpur, Selangor and as far as the East Coast.

*Datuk Alexander*







*Silat martial art display by local youths.*

**N**aturalist Irshad Mobarak mimicked the calls of a hornbill. Seeing a bird fly past him, he quickly pointed to it and he called out its name - the sand piper.

Next, he turned the pages of a book in his hands and stopped at a page to show the picture of the bird to his captive audience.

They are young children, who crowded around him as they listened with bated breath, soaking up every word he said.

He told the children how swifts and swiftlets could fly without stopping for as long as two years, and how hornbills were monogamous, mating for life.

The occasion was a Geopark Conservation Day and the venue is Taman Legenda (Park of Legends), a showcase of what Geopark means in the town of Kuah, Langkawi.

### **YOU CANNOT LOVE WHAT YOU DO NOT KNOW**

As the Malay saying goes; you cannot love what you do not know, and Langkawi Development Authority (LADA) is going the extra mile to inculcate upon these young children what it is to appreciate the things they are endowed with.

The choice of Taman Legenda, a 20-hectare site, is indeed ideal to hold the grand Geopark Conservation Day to educate everyone on the importance of protecting Langkawi's natural heritage that has gained international recognition as an UNESCO Global Geopark.

Over 2,000 people turned up, including those from 25 government agencies and non-governmental organisations such as Friends of Langkawi Geopark (FLAG), Malaysian Nature Society and Langkawi Tourist Guides' Association.

The half-day "geo nature" themed programme saw top LADA officials, including LADA CEO Tan Sri Khalid Ramli joining in a day of fun.

They planted native seedlings in the compound of the park; other participants took part in GeoHunt, GeoCoral conservation and auto show programmes; and children in GeoNature drawing competition.



*Group photo of participants at the Geopark Conservation Day.*

**FUN-  
FILLED**

**Geopark Conservation Day**





*Naturalist Irshad Mobarak showing a book with photographs of the birds found in Langkawi to curious school children during a nature walk at Taman Legenda.*

GeoWalk involved Irshad taking groups of eager young students, Dr Abdul Ghani Hussain, known as Dr Herb, sharing his knowledge on local herbs and its medicinal values.

Chairman of the Langkawi chapter of the Malaysian Nature Society Eric Sinnaya says the venue, Taman Legenda, is itself a good teaching tool, as the beautiful 20ha park has features depicting Langkawi's legends, myths and geological history.

He believes that teaching children to love nature and the environment will have positive impact on many levels.

"Naturalists and groups like MNS and FLAG have the pool of expertise for LADA to tap on. We can share knowledge and help engage the people," he says.

As the children and youths went around with their nature walks and treasure hunt, several booths displayed uniquely Langkawi products, such as GeoCookies - homemade biscuits inspired by Langkawi's fossils and geological wonders by tour guide Nor Azlina Ahmad, who is one of the 21 geopark ambassadors appointed to promote Langkawi's assets, its Global Geopark status.



*Dr Abdul Ghani Hussain, better known as Dr Herb, sharing the types of herbs that are good for health.*





*Tan Sri Khalid flagged off participants of a Geo-Hunt event.*

Khalid says Langkawi's conservation is crucial as an integral part of its journey to become a premium eco- and geo-tourism destination.

It is the hope that the children, with raised awareness on the importance of conservation, will become adults who will protect Langkawi's natural heritage even more than their own parents.

# Kampung Kilim

## Community Cooperative

**L**angkawi becoming a UNESCO Global Geopark has greatly benefitted the local community by creating opportunities for the people to improve their livelihoods in the services sector - tourism.

No longer relying on agricultural activities like farming and fishing to survive, many have found work in the hospitality and food and beverages businesses, and some have turned entrepreneurs.

Village folks have also ventured into enterprises of their own. In Kampung Kilim, villagers have set up the Kampung Kilim Cooperative in 2010 to do business to generate income and look after the interests of its members.

The cooperative's deputy chairman Kasa Harun says the cooperative began with 68 members but now has 130.

"We have 120 boats belonging to our members that are chartered to take tourists out for river cruises to see the sights at the Kilim Karst Geoforest Park.

"Those who want to rent out their boats must be registered members with the cooperative. We encourage our fellow villagers to do this because this is a way for them to make extra income for their families," he says.



*The Kampung Kilim jetty.*



Kasa Harun

The Kilim Karst Geoforest Park is famed for its mangrove forests, making it a must-see for nature-loving visitors; and the ancient limestone karst hills with vertical and overhanging cliffs.

It also has beautiful lagoons and beaches. Other attractions include the Bat Cave, Cave of Stories (Gua Cherita) and fish farms.

Other than nature tours and cruises, the Kampung Kilim cooperative also runs a restaurant, catering service and canopy renting business. It also has vans to rent out for tours.

"We took part in national village competitions and won some grants that made it possible for us to invest in these other businesses.

"We are hoping to start a handicraft business too but we need to find people who can make quality products. We hope we can do it in the near future," he says.

Apart from doing business, the cooperative also serves Langkawi by taking part in programmes organised by the Langkawi Development Authority and other agencies for the betterment of the geopark and the people.

"We give our commitment to take part in any programme by the authorities like green and environmental-friendly initiatives. Anything that is good for the geopark will be good for the community," Kasa says.



*Floating restaurant at Kilim Karst Geoforest Park.*



*Teachers visiting a fish farm at the rivermouth of the Kilim Karst Geoforest Park*



*A village head briefing tourists before boarding a boat to tour the Kilim Karst Geoforest Park*



# Kubang Badak River Fisherman's Cooperative

At Kubang Badak, which is being promoted as a 'bio-geotrail' and upcoming high-end tourist destination in Langkawi for nature-lovers, things are busy for the local cooperative.

The Kubang Badak River Fisherman's Cooperative, which was set up in 2012 and has 60 members from the villages of Kampung Ewa, Kampung Kubang Badak, Kampung Kelubi and Kampung Belibis, is offering river cruises and tours for tourists to see the mangrove forest and sights, as well as fishing and trolling excursions.

"We have seven licensed boats to take tourists out, and almost 80 fishing boats," the cooperative chairman Sabri Musa says.

"Tourism has given villagers opportunities to improve their livelihoods. Those with boats can offer cruises, licensed boatmen can lend their skills to pilot the boats, fishermen can teach visitors about fishing, and some who can speak in Chinese, English or other languages can serve as tour guides."

Kubang Badak near the northern coast of Langkawi island has the third largest mangrove forest in the Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark after the Kilim Karst and Dayang Bunting Geoforests.

In the mangrove forests are traces of charcoal factories left behind by a Siamese community that built a settlement there to harvest mangrove wood over a century ago.



Kampung Kubang Badak fishing jetty.



Many members of the cooperative in Kubang Badak come from fishing families. With Kubang Badak becoming a tourist destination, the members can earn extra income taking anglers on fishing excursions or sharing their skills.



Tour guides from Asian countries taken on a mangrove forest tour in Kubang Badak by Langkawi's own nature guides

Photo credit: Kubang Badak River Fishermen's Cooperative

Kubang Badak also features beautiful sceneries like the Mount Machinchang landscape at the river mouth, and natural attractions like an underwater geyser and sandbar.

On Jemuruk Island, visitors can see trilobites, a fossil group of extinct marine arthropods while at Dangli Island, they will see unique marine life and corals in the clear water.

Banking in on the many attractions in Kubang Badak, the cooperative also offer services like kayaking, eagle watching, cave exploration, island drop, island hopping, snorkeling, jungle trekking and island tours.

Sabri says there are plans to build a food court at the fishermen jetty so locals can showcase Langkawi's local food to visitors, and a floating restaurant at another location for high-end tourists.

"We want to have a restaurant that offers great food and a great view of Machinchang. It is still in planning stage. We will have to secure a grant, take a loan for it.

"Perhaps along the way, we can also develop some cottage industry products like handicrafts or local snacks," he says.

Like its counterpart in Kilim, the Kubang Badak cooperative also lends a hand to the authorities in community programmes and awareness campaigns.

"When we conduct tours or take part in programmes, we always remind children and visitors not to litter, especially in the sea.

"Working with the Fisheries Department, we make sure fishing nets don't get tangled with the corals and destroy them.

# GEO GROUPS

A Global Geopark is a thriving unified area that advances the protection and use of geological heritage in a sustainable way, and promotes the economic well-being of the people who live there.

It is a bottom-up approach to empower local communities and give them the opportunity to develop cohesive partnerships with the common goal of promoting the area's significant geological processes, features, periods of time, historical themes linked to geology, or outstanding geological beauty.

These definitions necessitate the engagement of the local community at different levels of society such as the creating of geo groups to bring about a deeper community involvement.



## GEO COMMUNITY

The Langkawi Development Authority (LADA) organises 'Geo Community' programmes for locals and people outside Langkawi.

The aim of the programmes is to promote the Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark to both the local community and outsiders, so they will understand the importance of the geopark status to the island.

The programmes also help raise awareness and knowledge about Langkawi's natural heritage and marine life that need protection and conservation.

An example of a Geo Community programme organized by LADA was the Independence Day celebration with some 150 Kubang Badak folks in August this year. Locals were given a briefing on the geopark while enjoying the festivities and games.



## GEO TEACHERS

The Langkawi Development Authority (LADA) ropes in teachers - both in and outside Langkawi - to help increase understanding of the Unesco Global Geopark.

This government agency organises 'Geo Teacher' programmes that promote the geosites to teachers and increase their understanding and awareness on the geopark status.

Among the programmes held earlier this year were the Nature Sustainability Exploration and Collaborative Programme with the Titi Gantung Primary School, Geopark Briefing with school heads and teachers in Langkawi, and Geo Teachers' visit to the Kilim Karst Geoforest Park with Information and Communication Technology (ICT) teachers from Langkawi.

The programmes were participated by 130 teachers who had the chance to see and experience the uniqueness of Langkawi's natural heritage.

## GEO VOLUNTEERS

The Langkawi Development Authority encourages volunteerism in youths aged 18 to 30, especially those interested in activities beneficial to the community and related to the UNESCO Global Geopark.

In its 'Geo Volunteer' programmes, youths take part in geopark activities, that impart to them information on the geosites as well as the chance to contribute their own ideas and views towards protecting the geopark.

The idea is to inculcate in them a sense of responsibility so they can contribute productively towards developing the UNESCO Global Geopark.

The Geo Volunteer programmes are designed to attract youths to be involved in conservation efforts, which are important to Langkawi; and to develop the potentials of young people and instill good habits and adopt sustainable practices.

Earlier this year, LADA held several youth volunteerism programmes such as the Rakan Muda (Geo Volunteer) Camp and Green Technology programme with the Langkawi District Youth and Sports office; and the Nature Volunteers programme with students from Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) Shah Alam at the Kilim Karst Geoforest Park.

The two programmes involved 100 youths to replant mangrove plants and clean up to promote sustainable practices in the Kilim geoforest park.



# GEOPARK AMBASSADORS

**N**obody knows Langkawi as well as the people, who work to promote the UNESCO Global Geopark on a daily basis, like tourism players, naturalists and educators.

The Langkawi Development Authority appoints 21 as Geopark Ambassadors, who officially represent the Langkawi community to promote the geopark in the course of their work.

Their job during their two-year appointment is mainly to share their expertise and knowledge to ensure others get the right information about geopark, become aware of the importance of preserving Langkawi's natural beauty and resources, to encourage tourism, to help locals increase their economic benefits through tourism, and to support and promote events and programmes held for the good of the geopark.



*A group photo of all 21 Geopark Ambassadors after the appointment ceremony in 2016.*

They are:

**Mdm Norini Wan Awang**, school principal  
**Mdm Fuziah Mohamad**, tour guide  
**Mdm Indara Rahayu Mohd Noor**, nature tour guide  
**Mdm Nor Azlina Ahmad**, entrepreneur and GeoCookies maker  
**Dr Abdul Ghani Hussain**, doctor and herb expert  
**Mr Sabri Musa**, Kubang Badak River Fishermen's Cooperative chairman  
**Mr Rusasmizal Mohd Ghazali**, community leader  
**Mr Teh Cheng Chye**, teacher  
**Mr Mohd Rizal Bin Hassan**, businessman and NGO personality

**Mr Mehad Daud**, fish farmer  
**Mr Asri Shaaban**, community leader  
**Mr Abu Bakar Che Saad**, boatman  
**Mr Maton Mahmud**, community leader  
**Mr Othman Ayeb**, naturalist, nature tour guide and snake expert  
**Mr Aidi Abdullah**, naturalist  
**Mr Pak Malau**, restaurateur  
**Mr Omar Ariffin**, community leader  
**Mr Muhammad Mohd Azmi**, photographer and NGO personality  
**Mr Khairudin Abdul Hamid**, artist  
**Mr Malik Abdul Aziz**, community leader  
**Mr Razmi Rahmat**, hotelier

## HOTELIER RAZMI RAHMAT: SERVING FROM THE HEART



**A**s the general manager of Adya Hotel Langkawi, Razmi Rahmat is in the frontline of the hospitality industry.

He meets many visitors and hotel guests and his role of a Geopark Ambassador will ensure that the visitors take home fond memories of their visit to Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark.

"Geopark is not just about rocks, it is about its people; members of the local community who give the island its soul and colour.

"The local community should be involved with sharing the stories and knowledge about the geopark with the tourists. That also means I can play a role in sharing what I know with my hotel guests.

"At Adya Hotel, we place coffee table books and Geopark brochures in the rooms. We also have a Geopark Stall at our restaurant, serving local delicacies for breakfast.

"The most important thing for us is to provide service from our hearts to win over our guests and ensure they have a memorable stay," he says.

Razmi also assists locals improve their livelihoods through economic opportunities in the tourism sector and raise awareness on the importance of preserving the island's natural resources in his role as Geopark Ambassador.

Adya Hotel staff takes part in local community activities like mangrove

swamp cleanup and tours to learn about the geopark.

Razmi, a city boy from Kuala Lumpur, has been living in Kedah for over 20 years. He says he first visited Langkawi in 1991 for the opening of a new resort that coincided with the first Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace exhibition.

"I have been in love with the island ever since. I never thought I would return to Langkawi at that time. But now, this island is home to me."

Razmi's favourite thing about Langkawi is its natural beauty. He has travelled the world and never found another place that could rival Langkawi's natural beauty and tranquil atmosphere.

"It is always worth spending time exploring the island by land, sea and air. You can explore the island by car or motorcycle, take a boat ride for a cruise along the Kilim River, or sail out to sea for island hopping or snorkeling at Pulau Payar marine park. You can even take a helicopter ride to see the spectacular sight of the many islands or go skydiving.

"We have it all in Langkawi and visitors only have to choose how they want to enjoy its natural beauty," he says.

## Snake charmer OTHMAN AYEB For the love of nature



In 1999, Othman Ayeb achieved a Guinness World Book of Records as the world champion in the inaugural snake-handling competition in the world.

The love of snake handling and the great outdoors made him stay on in the Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark for this lad who hails from Johore, a southern state in Malaysia.

Today, Othman works as a nature guide and knows the geosites in Langkawi like the back of his hand.

"I am appointed Geopark Ambassador because I am a nature guide," he says.

As a guide, his job requires him to share information about Langkawi's geosites and taking tourists, students and the media on trips while showing them what makes the island unique and beautiful.

"When I take groups out to see the geosites, I will always stress on three aspects - geology, ecology and organisation. The three make up the acronym GEO.

"I want my groups to be able to see the uniqueness of Langkawi's geological features. I want them to know about the rich flora and fauna that thrive in our ecosystem.

"Then, I want to show them how the people of Langkawi had organised themselves as a community to protect the geopark they have. A geopark is a place where its people have space to benefit from the status and improve their livelihoods," he says.

Othman also heads the Langkawi Tourist Guide Association and active as a volunteer to promote Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark.

In 2011 and 2015 when UNESCO evaluators visited Langkawi to reassess and revalidate its Global Geopark status, Othman was tasked to guide them. In 2015, he was invited to Japan to promote the 'geo-guide' profession.

"Langkawi is a geopark before Japan, so they learned from us. An eco-tourism group from Japan also visited us to learn how we survive as full-time guides because in Japan, they cannot make a living just working as a guide."

Othman is also working with the Langkawi Development Authority to design courses for training specialised nature guides for the geopark.

Originally from Johor, Othman moved to Langkawi - his wife's hometown - in 1991 and stayed on ever since, falling in love with the laid back lifestyle.

"I was a scout in school. I have always loved the outdoors, the jungle. My wife told me if I wanted to live and work somewhere close to nature, Langkawi is the place.

(Photos courtesy of [www.rimbawi-langkawi.com](http://www.rimbawi-langkawi.com))



## PRINCIPAL NORINI WAN AWANG: FOR THE LOVE OF EDUCATION

Kedawang Secondary School in Langkawi is not your normal school, it is a Geopark school.

Being Geopark has earned the envy of many. It has hosted exchange programmes with schools from other countries.

"Three to four times a year we will have kids from other countries visiting us. We just hosted three Singaporean schools. Before that, we had visitors from Mexico and Hong Kong. Next year, a South Korean school is coming," says school principal Norini Wan Awang.

She has been credited with attaining the status of a "green school" for the environmental-friendly practices adopted in her school in the state of Kedah.

Norini says her school had received several visits from schools around Malaysia and the world annually through exchange programmes.

"So, as a Geopark school, our students will do their part to promote Langkawi to their overseas peers through forums and other social activities like cultural exchanges.

"The arrangement has greatly benefited our kids because they get to connect with students from other countries, practise to speak English and learn about other places," she says.

As a Geopark Ambassador, her role is to make sure her students understand the important part they can play if they want to have a sustainable Langkawi.

Sharing information with other schools will raise awareness about Geopark. To me, doing promotional work and advocacy has become a routine. I find a lot of fun in it," she says.

Norini has been invited to give briefings and lectures on Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark and taken part in international exchanges as a Geopark Ambassador. She and other Geopark Ambassadors recently visited Indonesia's Gunung Sewu UNESCO Global Geopark.

"We met and exchanged information with Gunung Sewu geopark officers. It was a good experience because we all got to learn new things."

Norini is from Baling, a rural town on mainland Kedah, but has lived in Langkawi for 30 years because what she loves most about the island is its peaceful and quiet lifestyle and friendly local community.



# GEOPARK NO LAUGHING MATTER

**T**he Geopark concept was relatively new and lightly taken with a ton of skepticism even a decade ago.

"I thought it was something like a theme park, like Disneyland," says Datuk Dr Kamarulzaman Abdul Ghani, who was the general manager of the Langkawi Development Authority (LADA).

"World famous geologists (Professor Emeritus Datuk) Ibrahim Komoo and (Professor) Mohd Shafeea Leman came to meet me, but I was skeptical because I didn't understand what this geopark thing was."

He admitted that he was not "very keen" about it when the idea was first presented to him in 2005 by the Malaysian Geological Heritage Group.

It was a time when investors in Langkawi were all involved in tourism-related projects to make money. But upon further briefing by the National University Malaysia's Institute for Environment and Development (LESTARI), he began to understand what it is and how the Geopark concept can be the paradigm change that Langkawi needed.

"I realised that Langkawi, a tourist destination that has always banked on nature as its attractions, has not tapped into 'geo-tourism'.

"People visit places to admire landscapes like mountains, hills, rivers, beaches...all that have to do with geology, the study of earth's history. We could actually educate people who visit Langkawi to appreciate that too.

"To me, it was a new opportunity to give Langkawi some added value, and to generate new interest in the place. Langkawi's geological history could be a new product," he says.

*Datuk Kamarulzaman and Tan Sri Khalid Ramli listening to Dr Ghani Abdul Hussain who shared on the goodness of a Malay dish called Laksa.*

On June 1, 2007, Langkawi was accepted as a member of the prestigious UNESCO Global Geoparks Network (GGN), giving it international validation as a Global Geopark.

As a marketing brand, Langkawi was officially renamed 'Langkawi Geopark' on May 31, 2006, by the Kedah government and later on October 6 affirmed by the federal government.

It rested on the government to help the local community to understand and convince them that a geopark status was good for Langkawi; to take the tourism sector to a higher level, and in turn improve their livelihoods.

A lot of promotional and advertising exercises were implemented. A magazine on geopark was published and a theme song was introduced.

"The song used to be played at almost every government event in Langkawi. Until today, the local radio station Langkawi FM still plays it," he says.

But a decade down the road, Kamarulzaman says Langkawi - the 52nd Geopark in the UNESCO Global Geopark Network - still has a long way to go as compared to progress made by other Geoparks set up later.

"There are 127 Geoparks in 35 countries. Malaysia is not picking up as fast as expected. Since 2006, Langkawi has remained the sole Geopark in the country.

"There are over 10 potential Geoparks in



*FLAG chairman Datuk Kamarulzaman Abdul Ghani*

Malaysia. Japan, China and European countries are pushing for Geopark recognition for the sake of sustainable development, conservation, education and socio-economic balance."

Now retired, Kamarulzaman has continued his work promoting Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark through a non-governmental organisation called Friends of Langkawi Geopark (FLAG) that was set up in 2013.

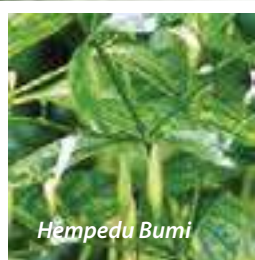
"We need to have a community-based organisation that can help keep an eye on things and assist the authorities and the people to do what is necessary. We can only say we are the best geopark if we have the best practices in sustainability, and the people understand it and benefit from it.

"If we talk of geological landscapes, other Geoparks like those in China surpasses Langkawi. But in terms of best practices, I believe Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark has a chance to shine."





# DR HERB



*Hempedu Bumi*



*Kandar Rusa*



*Urang Aring*

**A**s Langkawi continues to progress and grow as a premier eco-tourism and geo-tourism destination for both local and international high-end tourists, concern over the environment is also heightening among naturalists and non-governmental organisations.

There are calls for the government to ensure children in schools are educated in the importance of appreciating and protecting their natural beauty and cultural heritage.

Trained medical doctor and traditional Malay and Islamic medical researcher Dr Abdul Ghani Hussain says people have lost the sense of wanting to conserve and preserve nature, and are "destroying nature all the time".

Dr Ghani, a herb specialist who champions the conservation and preservation of the flora of Langkawi, in particular, the mangrove and medicinal flora; says development has negative impact on Langkawi, and also Malaysia that is one of the most bio-diversified nations in the world.

"We have to fight, so we don't lose our biodiversity.

"If we cannot get the younger generations to be interested in conservation, we will lose everything in our time."

Dr Ghani, better known as Dr Herb, says it is good that the Langkawi Development Authority (LADA) - the custodian of the geopark - is doing its part to promote conservation.

LADA recently organised the Geopark Conservation Day that attracted a crowd of over 2,000 schoolchildren, youths, civil servants, naturalists and NGOs. The event highlighted the importance of conservation and promoted green practices like not using plastic bags.

Dr Ghani says it is a good start in making people more aware of the need to protect Langkawi's natural heritage, but conservation efforts must be a daily affair.

"On our part as citizens, we should be conserving nature on a daily basis. I go into the forest to collect plants of medicinal values.

"I then keep and care for the plants at home so they don't die and we can preserve the vast knowledge in herbal medicine.

"I encourage everyone to do this. If they have some space at home, they should plant something," said the doctor who wants to marry modern medicine with traditional Malay medicine to help people.

Dr Ghani is a well-known personality in Langkawi, where he had served as a doctor for over 30 years.

He is now working with traditional Malay and Islamic medicine. Since 2000, he has been collecting medicinal plants. He has over 500 different species now, but he is still growing his collection.

He also conducts walks that educate people about the healing powers of local herbs and plants.



**T**he name Irshad Mobarak is a well-known naturalist in Langkawi. Many know him as 'Jungle Walla', which is the name of his company that conducts educational nature tours in the Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark.

A former banker, he started his love affair with nature since he was a boy. He returned to the natural world he loves by setting up a wildlife tour company in Langkawi to celebrate the beauty of nature and its birds, insects and plants.

Apart from leading nature walks for tourists, Irshad also trains budding naturalists and conservationists and takes part in scientific expeditions.

He has appeared on the National Geographic Channel, Discovery Channel and most recently as the first Malaysian to be featured on the globally broadcasted TEDxWWF talk in Singapore.

Those who have joined his tours would remember being captivated by his passion and talent in engaging his audience, whether young or old. If he speaks of concerns about the environment, one would remember his words.

"I will be planting trees forever if children in kindergartens and schools are not educated on conservation. If we can educate kids from young, then my job of planting trees will come to an end.

"It is their future. If we don't teach them about the condition of the environment now, there will be no future. As parents, we should make sure the world we leave them is also a world as beautiful as the



*Brahminy Kite eagle*

one we first saw," he says.

Irshad believes enforcement is not the cure all but the lack of education on protecting and appreciating the natural environment would do more damage.

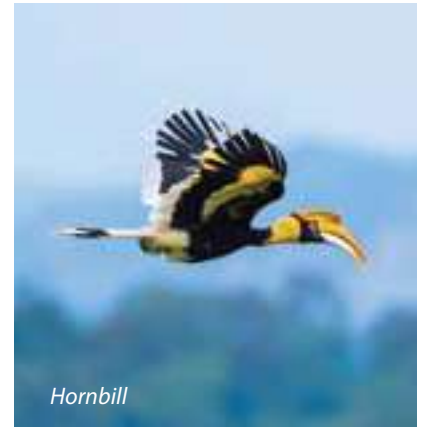
Education department should be more involved in teaching pupils and students of the natural world at an age when children are naturally curious and keen to explore and learn.

Protecting Langkawi's nature is not for the preservation of the tourism industry, but to ensure a supply of clean water; and prevent soil erosion, sedimentation and pollution that is detrimental to life.

"Saving the rainforest is saving our own lives and future," he says, adding that he looks forward to more conservation education and awareness programmes by LADA in the future.

At the recent Geopark Conservation Day organised by LADA in November, Irshad himself took charge of the GeoWalk programme for children.

He led groups of primary school children around Taman Legenda to learn about nature, birds, plants and issues like climate change.



*Hornbill*

He told them interesting facts like how swiftlets and swifts could fly two years without landing, how hornbills mated for life, and pointed to them a cycad plant that is a species eaten by dinosaurs but poisonous to people.

"These are the kind of information you want to share with people, like children, and they will begin to have a sense of appreciation towards the natural world around them."



# BIRD MAN *of Langkawi*

## Bird Map



Brahminy Kite Eagle



Brown Winged Kingfisher



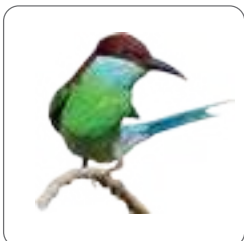
Eastern Cattle Egret



Whistling Ducks  
*Photo Greg Schneider*



Reed Warblers



Blue Throated Bee Eater  
*Photo Andy\_LYT*



Spotted Doves



Great Slaty Woodpecker  
*Photo Dr Lim Ho Min*



Mountain Hawk Eagle  
*Photo Carl-Johan Svensson*



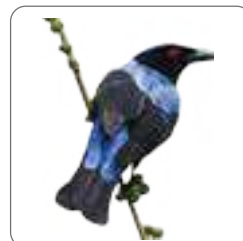
Crimson Sunbird



The Great Hornbill



Orange-breasted Trogon



Asian Fairy Bluebird  
*Photo Ingo Waschkes*



# MR GREEN LANGKAWI

SUSTAINABLE CHAT GROUP

Most chat groups are a shared concern with their common objective; they are filled with postings for laughs and update on club and societal issues.

None or few are taken seriously. Yet fewer can claim to have a broad representation that engages decision makers and NGOs to the common man.

The Langkawi Sustainable chat group chooses to be different, that is how its founder Anthony Wong, the Frangipani Resort Managing Director, sees it.

The deep concern for the future of a sustainable Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark was the trigger that prompted him to act to seek consensus from this diverse chat members.

With almost 300 chat members, this chat group acts as a de-facto medium for the exchange of ideas, a platform where topical issues are raised and feedback channeled to chat members those who have the authority to act or take remedial action.

In the Langkawi Sustainable chat group are senior key government officers, academicians, tourism operators and owners, NGOs, universities, media, hotel managers and MAH, Trash Hero, Rotary Club members and fishermen.

## Geopark Heroes & Personalities

His group chat members are action-orientated, they acted on what they complained about and recently, a group met at a Langkawi Dialogue event in November to discuss, solicit views and seek remedial actions to improve the tourism landscape.

**Q** You started the Sustainable Langkawi chat group which now has almost 300 members. Can you elaborate why you decided to do this at this point in time?

**A** I started the chat group to educate as many people as possible on sustainability and to alert them of serious issues facing Langkawi island. We speak out on local issues and raise funds to support charity and social issues.

**Q** The chat group counts among the participants several key government officers who are frank enough to receive constructive criticisms. Has it been effective to bring about prompt remedial action and what examples can you tell us.

**A** Yes, it does keep government officers on their toes and they take actions. They are more aware of what's happening and they know their actions will be scrutinized as more people in the chat group are watching.

*Last month, an illegal bar was opened on the side of my beach resort and after I posted a photo and met with the District Officer, the bar was dismantled the next day. Very effective.*

*Another incident was when 600 Rohingyas and Bangladeshis landed in Langkawi and the Police OCPD contacted me through the chat group and I provided food and drinks to them before they came to help out. We are the bridge to help the needy.*

**Q** Can awareness trigger action, which for some would be against their vested interests?

**A** If they are illegal, even with or without vested interest, and they know it is wrong, they cannot hide.

**Q** An action that gained traction has resulted in a Langkawi Dialogue event that was held in your Frangipani Resort. Can you tell how resolutions passed have a bearing that will enhance the wellbeing of Langkawi UNESCO Global

**A** We have to help the fisherman and farmers and they must benefit from tourism. We need to educate even the religious leaders about Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark and the need to have sustainability. Education is the key.

**Q** On your own part, you have fought for Go Green and No to Plastic. Tell us your views why the private sector should be more aggressive to promote this ideal.

**A** The private sector have to do more as they are the main benefactor and thus must make time and spend money to help in greening to safeguard Langkawi's future.

**Q** You may want to share what and how Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark would take tourism in the island to the next level?

**A** We need to really push the theme Naturally Langkawi by taking actions that reflect this. We work closely with LADA to obtain the renewal of its Geopark status and support many of its sustainable projects.

*It is about going low carbon by using electric cars and be self sufficient with water supply, green energy and practise rainwater harvesting. It is also about growing own organic food, treating our sea with respect without sewage discharges.*

*There must be a height limit for beachfront buildings, no more forest clearing and the need to maintain 60% forest cover on the main island. Equally important is the need to continue to educate school children, the local community and also government bodies about sustainability.*



Wong (in shorts) briefing UNESCO inspectors on green features in his Frangipani Resort.

## BIODEGRADABLE TABLEWARE

### Mutiara Atiqah for recyclable plates and containers

**F**ood services, hotel and medical disposable specialist company Mutiara Atiqah also participated at the Geopark Conservation Day in November, promoting the use of biodegradable materials in place of plastic to cut down waste.

Company managing director Sukmawati Buyong says her company wanted to help raise awareness among Langkawi residents that it is better to switch to biodegradable materials.

Most Malaysians are still dependent on plastic bags and other plastic materials, which contributed to pollution.

Langkawi recognized as an UNESCO Global Geopark is the right place to start banning use of plastic bags.

"Penang has banned plastic bags years ago, causing many retailers to switch to paper bags and the public to bring their own reusable bags when they go shopping. I don't understand why we are not doing this everywhere.

"Being an island, it should be easier for Langkawi to introduce the idea and implement it. It should be easier for the authorities to control."

Sukmawati was at her stall that showcased biodegradable tableware.

There are plans to turn Langkawi into Malaysia's first low-carbon island.

**A** woman's campaign to clean up changed the mindset of long-staying expatriates but also the local community.

Today, Trash Hero Langkawi which Ulrika Player set up on November 16, 2015, aims to give people the chance to do something themselves for the environment.

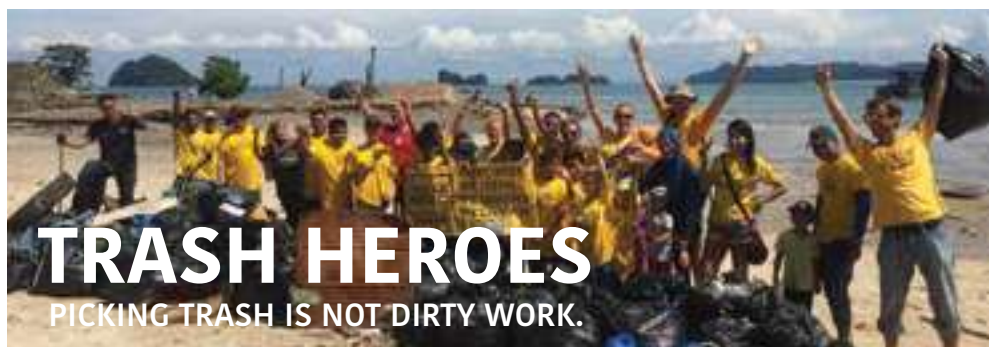
It wasn't an easy start getting people to dirty their hands. But perseverance aided by social media publicity drew people's attention and convince them to do their part for Langkawi's cleanliness.

Player wrote postings on Trash Hero Facebook page and sent them to every social media group she could find in Langkawi, reaching a few thousand people at a time.

Trash Hero has over a thousand people following its Facebook page helping to promote the page and its green efforts to their friends.

There is now a core group of volunteers who go around to put up posters, talk to people and invite them to join the cause.

"Our greatest achievement so far is having more than 800 people volunteering to help clean up Langkawi. Those who join a



cleanup actually change their behaviour. They think twice before throwing trash."

To date, Trash Hero Langkawi has organised 52 cleanups with 851 volunteers and picked up a total 14,306 kg of rubbish - which is an average 275kg per cleanup.

The largest outing was attended by 149 people while its biggest cleanup collected 5,000kg of rubbish that filled up three lorries.

Player rides around Langkawi on her motorcycle to identify locations - beaches, villages and roads - for the weekly cleanups.

The cleanups are done with help from staff of a private rubbish collector, Environment Idaman.

Her campaign has got the support of the local authorities and local businesses, which donated gloves, trash bags and lunches for volunteers.

Support also comes from schools which invited Trash Hero Langkawi and its fellow volunteers to talk to students on the importance of preserving Langkawi's trees and conserving its water source and nature and to say no to plastic bags, straws, cups and Styrofoam products.

"I joined Universiti Utara Malaysia students for a cleanup in August and the students are now keen to set up their own Trash Hero UUM on campus.

"We are having a similar programme with Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia students. Hopefully, there will be a Trash Hero UKM in the near future."



# Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark

## Advisor

**P**rofessor Emeritus Dato' Dr Ibrahim Komoo has been appointed Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark advisor by Langkawi Development Authority (LADA) for a five-year tenure.

He provides advice on the global geopark's development from the technical and scientific aspect to ensure Langkawi continues to spearhead the geopark vision in the South-east Asian region.

Among other responsibilities, Ibrahim will continue to contribute his technical and scientific inputs to ensure the success of the Kubang Badak geo-tourism project, which is being developed as a high-end tourism product as well as to make it the model for geo-tourism best practices in global geoparks.

He has also given his input on the development of the Pulau Tuba GeoTrail to grow the third-largest island's tourism sector by building geo-tourism sites, engaging the local community, and maintaining the geo-trail sustainably.

He also advises LADA on developing the Geopark Discovery Centre in Kilim and the preparation of public education materials on



Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark.

Ibrahim continues to promote the Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark internationally in the Asia-Pacific Geoparks Network and UNESCO Global Geoparks Network.

His position requires him to visit the LADA office two to three times a month and attend important events to help increase the knowledge and capacity of LADA Geopark and Conservation Division staff and other parties of interest like government agencies, tourism entrepreneurs and the local community.

## Prof Ibrahim elected Vice President of UNESCO Global Geopark Network

The seventh UNESCO Global Geoparks International Conference was held at the English Riviera UNESCO Global Geopark in Torquay, United Kingdom, in September 2016.

The conference, held once every two years, was attended by over 600 delegates from 60 nations, who presented almost 250 technical papers - sharing ideas and experience on developing and managing their respective geoparks.

The international meet had special meaning to Malaysia, which was represented by its sole

geopark - the Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark.

At the event, Malaysia's renowned geologist Professor Emeritus Ibrahim Komoo, who was instrumental in making Langkawi a UNESCO Global Geopark, was elected Vice President of the Global Geoparks Network (GGN).

The presidency of the new GGN executive council, which will spearhead the development of the UNESCO Global Geopark from 2016 to 2019, went to Professor Nickolas Zouros from Greece.

The eighth international conference on UNESCO Global Geoparks will be held in September 2018 in Italy's Adamello Brenta UNESCO Global Geopark.

## ASPIRING GEOPARKS



Delta Sarawak



Lake Kenyir, Terengganu



Gunung Jerai, Kedah



Mount Kinabalu, Sabah



Gua Tempurung, Perak

# MUROTO UNESCO GLOBAL GEOPARK

Where the ocean  
and the land meet for  
the birth of a  
new habitable land

**M**uroto UNESCO Global Geopark is located in the southwestern part of Japan, on Shikoku Island. It includes all of Muroto City, Kochi Prefecture. The geopark covers an area of 248.2 square kilometers, stretching 18.6 km east to west, 27 km north to south, with 53.3 km of coastline. Muroto is notorious for being subject to frequent typhoons which occur in the Philippine Sea. The typhoons often cause serious damage with heavy rain and wind in summer and autumn.

Muroto UNESCO Global Geopark is located on the subduction zone where the Philippine Sea plate subducts under the Eurasian plate. The land of Muroto is formed from the layers at the bottom of deep sea by plate tectonic movements. At the Nankai Trough, 140 km off Cape Muroto, the Philippine Sea Plate is subducting beneath the Eurasian Plate. Muroto UNESCO Global Geopark is underlain by an accretionary complex of around 50 million to 16 million years ago formed at the plate boundary. The sediments of the Nankai Trough are attached to the continental plate to form a mass of built-up sedimentary rock, called an accretionary complex, part of which is exposed on Cape Muroto for visitors to see and touch. The subduction process also caused a gabbroic magma intrusion and weak metamorphism in the sandstone/mudstone layers. The wedge-shaped cape of Muroto was formed by the oceanic

plate subduction and uplift of land. The Shikoku Island is also affected by an east-west compression, triggering uplifting of the Cape Muroto and Cape Ashizuri and subsidence of Tosa Bay. Cape Muroto is being uplifted by 1 to 2 m per 1000 years, which is among the world's top-class uplift rates. Marine terraces have developed near the coastline, with terrace plains on top at 180 m above present sea level, which formed at the Last Interglacial period,

125,000 years ago. The tectonic situation still causes earthquakes accompanied with tsunamis at an interval of 100 to 150 years.

Muroto UNESCO Global Geopark has established good relations with Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark since 2012 by cooperating in mutual information exchange, internet communication program of guides, exchanges in the areas of handicrafts, drawing and letter-writing.





# DONGVAN THE GLOBAL GEOPARK ROCK SONATE

**D**ong Van Karst Plateau UNESCO Global Geopark (DVG) is located in northeastern part of Vietnam, 320km from Hanoi and shares 176km of borders with China in the West and North.

With its unique geographical position, DVG plays the hedging role for Vietnam and is an important economic, social and national security gateway.

DVG covers all administrative boundaries of four districts namely Quan Ba, Yen Minh, Dong Van, and Meo Vac which are among the 62 poorest districts of the country with a total natural area of 2,326sq km, of which mountainous terrain accounts for 80% of the area.

DVG has an average elevation of 1,400m to 1,600m above sea level and is inhabited by 17 ethnic groups with over 250,000 people that account for nearly one-third of the provincial population. The area's most difficult conditions are the shortage of arable land, water for production and daily



life, coupled with harsh climate where winters are cold.

Despite the harsh natural conditions and extreme climate, DVG is endowed with the most spectacular natural scenery and mountains in Vietnam and also in Southeast Asia, where its geological, geomorphologic values and biological diversity are recognized nationally and internationally.

Officially a member of the Global Geoparks Network (GGN) since 2010, Dong Van Global Geopark has characteristics of a Karst system of the Himalayan Range. The mountains here have features such as sharply-cut, deep and narrow gorges, steep cliffs and towering mountains, the pyramids like peaks and caves and rock gardens. They are named such as Tu San Canyon, Ma Le stone forest, Trilobite fossils, Brachiopod fossils, Twin Mountain of Quan Ba, Lung Khuy cave, Kho My cave, etc.

DVG has extremely rich culture of 17 ethnic groups and is an attractive destination for tourists and researchers and conducive for people who want to get involved in the management, protection and promotion of heritage values for economic development and sustainable poverty reduction.

In particular, "Khau Vai love market" is a unique traditional festival. Other famous festival are "Gau Tao" of the Mong ethnic group held in the beginning of the new year, "Forest Spirit Holy" of the Pu Peo ethnic group, and "Cap Sac" of Dao.

In the Geopark, there are old buildings which are hundreds of years old, such as the Mong King's Palace; and those in the Old Town district of Dong Van.

Within the Dong Van UNESCO Global Geopark are the Du Gia National Park and Khau Ca Spices Natural Reserve, Bat Dai Son Nature Reserve and San Chi Natural Reserve.

The Geopark has a diversity of animal and plant systems with lots of rare trees, birds and reptiles. The snub-nosed monkey (*Rhinopithecus avunculus*) is one of the 25 primate species which is in danger of extinction in the world.

The unique combination of geological and heritage value, high biological diversity and long-standing cultural traditions of the indigenous communities make the Dong Van Global Geopark a unique tourism destination, attracting 800,000 tourists mainly locals each year.







At the Revive Unity Green Festival Langkawi 2016, participants took part in a two-day family event filled with green awareness activities, talks, mini-exhibition, music, and of course, food.

## Geopark-related Activities

**P**romoting the Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark and engaging people are constant affairs for Langkawi Development Authority (LADA). It participated by taking up booths to display Geopark information during local, national and international events in Langkawi.

The semi-final leg of the Miss Tourism International pageant was successfully staged here with 60 finalists from 60 countries vying for the beauty queen title in December 2016. Their participation in two separate performances - Silat martial art and Tai Chi - netted two Malaysia Book of Records for having the most number of nations taking part in the performances on the Sky Bridge, 650m above sea level.

The inaugural Tanjung Rhu Swim Fest was held with 210 swimmers from five nations taking part. Tanjung Rhu beach was chosen as the venue to showcase the beauty of the coastline and beautiful seascape there.

LADA also participated in international sporting events like the Langkawi Ironman 2016 triathlon in November and the first Tuba Trail Run 2016 earlier in April.

The triathlon in Langkawi, the second most challenging Ironman race in the world, drew over 1,000 athletes from 63 countries. Langkawi has been hosting the Ironman challenge since 2000.

Meanwhile, the 30km run on Pulau Tuba, Langkawi's third largest island, gave hundreds of local and international

runners the chance to see the less explored island, which is being developed as a new eco- and geo-tourism attraction to nature-loving visitors.

LADA also took part during the Langkawi Honda Day JDM Motorsport 2016, the Asia Pacific Postal Union Executive Council Meeting Langkawi 2016, the Malaysia UNESCO Day celebration, and the Langkawi International Laksa Carnival (LILAC 2016) in May.

To push the green and conservation agenda in Langkawi, LADA also took part in the YaHijau Langkawi Carnival - an initiative of the Malaysian Energy, Green Technology and Water Ministry - in October.

LADA also promoted Langkawi at the Kedah Travel Fair in September, and

Selangor Roadshow promotion programme in October.

Other events that showcased Langkawi earlier this year were the Langkawi Excellence Awards 2016, 'My Community Langkawi Geopark 2016' programme, launch of the Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark's new logo, 'Meet the Customer Day' with the Tourism Ministry, Tourism Open Day, 'Mai Langkawi' domestic promotion campaign, Merdeka Day Fishing Competition, Langkawi Youth Carnival, Finance Ministry Sports Festival and Langkawi Geo Products Carnival.



LADA CEO Datuk Azizan Noordin congratulating a winner of the inaugural Tanjung Rhu Swimfest 2016 race held in December 2016.



Participants of Langkawi Open Chess Tournament 2016 held at Dewan Myangkasa Akademi & Resort in October exposed to the need to conserve and practice responsible tourism."



Sixty beauty contestants in a group photograph outside 3D Art Museum in Oriental Village during the semi-finals leg of the Miss Tourism International 2016 pageant.



# ECO-SPORTS TOURISM

Eco-sports activities are drawing the world's attention to Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark.

These activities held almost every other month drew not only locals but also many foreign participants from all over the world.

The **Tuba Trail Run** over 30km in April showcases some of Langkawi's spectacular natural wonders and amazing landscapes. Runners get up close with the nature and wildlife of the Langkawi Geopark at the less explored islands of Pulau Tuba and Pulau Dayang Bunting.

The 2017 edition will offer three varied distances, including a 4km fun run, a new 15km route and the 30km route to cater to runners of all levels.

The **Ultra Marathon** over 50km or 100km in July takes runners along the route that winds through paddy fields, forest and beaches; providing one of the most unique ultra marathon race experiences.

**Ironman Malaysia** in November is the world's toughest Ironman race. Over 1,000 runners compete to earn the title of Ironman by competing in a 3.8km swim, 50km run and 180km cycling route.

This race is held since year 2000 testing athletes who are out to prove that **ANYTHING IS POSSIBLE®** by crossing finish lines at the world's most challenging endurance races.

**Tanjung Rhu SwimFest** in December is an open water swimming competition staged. Swimmers take part in three categories; a 2km route for budding swimmers, and the 4km and 6km routes for multi-sport athletes including triathletes, and long distance swim enthusiasts.

As Tanjung Rhu beach is close to the seas of Thailand, swimmers are taking part in the first international open water swimming event.

**Mt. Mat Chinchang SkyBridge Climb** in February 2017 is a 4.5km climb that finishes at the peak of the mountain after passing the cable car's Middle Station, crossing the length of the renowned SkyBridge as well as climbing up to the Top Station.

This trail will be opened exclusively for the Mt. Mat Chinchang SkyBridge Climb on raceday and will be a truly unique way to discover the hidden jewels of Mt. Mat Chinchang.

The open waters of the 99 magical islands in the archipelago of Langkawi also provides sailing enthusiasts the opportunities of racing in three regattas. They are the Royal Langkawi International Regatta, Raja Muda International Regatta and KFC Langkawi International Regatta Perdana & ASAF Sailing Cup.



*Ironman athletes taking part in the first leg of the event which is the 3.8km swim at Pantai Kok in Langkawi in November 2016.*



*Runners started their 30km race at the Tuba Trail Run in April 2016.*



## SUSTAINABLE PRACTICE IS THE KEY

The promotion of Langkawi as a UNESCO Global Geopark relies heavily on tourism players and entrepreneurs, who often work hand in hand with the Langkawi Development Authority in programmes that engage the local community and visitors.

Tour operators are doing much more than just introducing Langkawi as a premier eco- and geo-tourism destination. They are sharing the government's efforts to educate their peers and the children of Langkawi on the important values such as sustainable practices.

Langkawi Business Association (Niagakawi) deputy president Datuk Alexander I. says the association is involved in dialogues and organising courses that add value to what tourism operators offer guests.

Niagakawi is involved in the Langkawi International Dialogue, where

Malaysia hosts South African nations to share knowledge, boost ties, discuss global issues faced by developing countries, and promote Langkawi tourism.

"We also had one dialogue on sustainable tourism, and another coming up on organic padi farming," he says.

Niagakawi has conducted many courses on areas like sustainable businesses, and is now trying to promote organic farming, which will have long-term benefits for Langkawi.

Other courses like those on occupational safety were also conducted with the Malaysian Department of Occupational Safety and Health (DOSH)

Niagakawi is also conducting a safety training programme with the Marine Department to train, educate and issue licenses to up to 100 boat helmsmen to address the shortage.

"It means you are making sure your guests are safe when they sail with you," he says.



*Niagakawi's safety training programme to upgrade skills of 100 boat helmsmen in collaboration with Marine Department.*



*Schoolchildren learnt to look after the environment.*



## MALAYSIAN NATURE SOCIETY

Malaysian Nature Society Langkawi chairman Eric R. Sinnaya says Langkawi is blessed with bio-diversity and rich geological heritage but there is not enough education in schools to teach children to appreciate the world around them.

"Schoolchildren are change agents who will be able to look after the environment better than their parents if they are properly educated on conservation.

"Even by picking up waste at home, these kids will have some impact on their families. There is so much to learn,

and yet we are so ignorant. We are lucky that we have LADA to manage the geopark because it has government funding for activities like educational programmes for the community.

Sinnaya calls for better coordination among government agencies when it comes to protecting and preserving Langkawi's natural heritage since LADA itself has no enforcement power.





### PILING ON LADA'S GOOD WORK

**P**lans are in the pipeline to leverage on the state's recent overseas promotion of the new archaeological finding of the oldest civilization in Southeast Asia in Sungai Batu in the mainland to attract hi-end tourists to extend their stay to visit Langkawi island and vice-versa.

"The state will cross promote Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark and Sungai Batu's Kedah Tua Kingdom in the mainland. We hope to unlock the tourism potentials of the aspiring Gunung Jerai Geopark and Sungai Merbok mangrove forest, which is

seeking UNESCO Biosphere Reserve status.

Other eco-tourism products are Madu Kelulut, Oyster Farming, Organic Paddy and Permaculture activities along Sungai Merbok and Pulau Bidan, Tsunami Gallery and Forestry Museum. Interestingly tourists visit these sites under the Volunteer Tourism programme.

The state of Kedah is also going big on archaeo-tourism with the recent excavation findings of the oldest civilization in Southeast Asia in Sungai Batu. Nearby is the Merbok Archaeological Museum and oldest skeletal remains of Perak Man in nearby Leng-gong Archaeological Museum.

"Tour packages, together with a trip to Langkawi, will make a visit to Kedah a complete adventure, hence it is a visit to where it all began," says Kedah Aman Makmur Tourism Chief Executive Officer Dato' Zulkifli Mohamad.

During the ancient Kedah Tua Civilisation, iron was smelted in Sungai Batu and traded by Indian, Chinese and Arab merchants. It reached the Roman Empire where it was used to make the wheels of its chariots that helped Rome expanded its empire.

Sungai Batu showcased the early iron smelting technology as this area was known before in Sanskrit as "Kataha" the ancient Kedah.

Kedah Tua Kingdom at Sungai Batu is the cradle of civilization in Southeast Asia and has been chronometrically dated as early as 535 BC, making it even older than that of Angkor Wat in Cambodia and Borobudur Buddhist temple in Central Java, Indonesia, built in the 9th and 12th Century respectively.

Sungai Batu's archaeological marvel, Angkor Wat and Borobudur will feature prominently as part of the World Archeo Heritage Trail at this year's Visit Asean@50 campaign.

## ALL EAGLES IN ONE PLACE @ WILDLIFE PARK LANGKAWI

**B**rahminy Kite, the eagle emblem of Langkawi, white-bellied sea eagles and hornbills fly in the wild.

Sightings are common when you cruise along the mangrove swamps in Kilim Karst Geoforest Park and Kubang Badak a new geo-tourism destination. Elsewhere, sightings of the eagles – birds of prey - are a chance encounter.

At Wildlife Park Langkawi, you are able to get to feed and touch them during show times everyday.

Visit the park to get close and personal with other fauna of Langkawi. The petting zones are popular with kids. Zoo volunteers and staff are helpful with information of these birds and animals there.

Through Corporate Social Responsibility projects like Zoo volunteer programmes and ticket sponsorships outside Kedah, Park General Manager John Teoh says, the Wildlife Park Langkawi has helped to encourage locals to visit Langkawi to get to know more about its UNESCO Global Geopark status.



## EXOTIC FOOD IN LANGKAWI



*Beronok salad*



Food is aplenty in Langkawi and visitors are often spoilt for choice with the hundreds of restaurants and food stalls offering different types of cuisine.

Seafood is popular and those who want to taste dishes unique to Langkawi will have to try the 'Beronok' - a sea cucumber that is picked from the muddy swamplands on Pulau Tuba.

When harvested, only the translucent ones are chosen. Those that are yellow or brown are old and will not taste good.

The beronok can only be served uncook because the sea cucumber that is 80% water will shrink substantially when exposed to heat. So, locals serve the Beronok raw in a salad they call 'Kerabu Beronok'.

To make it, the sea cucumber is cut into halves and washed. Then it is chopped up and washed again. At this

stage, the sea cucumber, which is originally the size of a forearm, would have shrunk to the size of a thumb.

Then, it is mixed with fried coconut kernel, chopped chillies, lemongrass, mango and cashew nut leaves. The combination of ingredients make the Beronok salad a tasty appetiser.

Locals also eat a seasonal green seaweed they call 'lattut', which is salty and crunchy to the palate.

It is harvested near the Kilim Karst Geoforest Park. It can be eaten raw like a salad or served together with barbecued fish and sambal.

Another specialty in Langkawi is 'gamat' soup made of sea cucumber. It is usually prepared with chicken, Chinese mushrooms, ginger and garlic.

These dishes can be found in Malay restaurants and food stalls in Langkawi.



*Latutt eaten raw as salad*

## GEOLICIOUS COOKIES

The look and feel of the cookies is geopark inspired.

These unusual cookies creation is available at Sky Cab Souvenir Boutique and at Geo Café at Seven Wells Waterfall near Oriental Village.

At Geo Café, you can savour a wide range of cuisine listed in its Geo-Menu.

Geo-Cookies, as they are called, are shaped after Langkawi's unique ancient fossils, interesting different types of rocks and the exotic landscape of Langkawi.

Whereas, the Geo-Menu are inspired by Langkawi's famous landmarks such as the Pulau Dayang Bunting (Pregnant Maiden Island), Gunung Mat Chincang (Mat Chinchang Mountain), Gua Kelawar (Bats Cave), Kilim Karst Pinnacles etc.

The Geo Café is the brainchild of Universiti Utara Malaysia business graduate Fatimah Shafiqah. Her

mother, Azlina Ahmad, is a LADA (Langkawi Development Authority) Geopark Ambassador and tourist guide.

Incorporating the 3P concept of Planet, People and Profit, Geo Café started operations in June this year to raise awareness, understanding and appreciation of nature and its sustainability.

That is why, the Geo Menu is created to highlight the importance of every element and component in Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark. Every rock formation, every fossil site, every flora, every fauna, every cultural practice and every myth must be protected, be educated, and be preserved for the next generation.

"This is a small contribution of conservation by us, especially when we are living in a place of geological wonders that is almost as old as the earth," says Fatimah.

Just throw them any questions about Langkawi and you will be amazed by their tales of wonders, that are as old as time. Every legend, every story, every sip of the delicious coffee and



every bite of the tasty cookies will make you come back for more.

Patrons have given the cookies a thumbs up and now the Café serves Geo-Food, Geo- Juices and organises educational Geo-Nature activities. Soon, there will be Geo-Souvenir and more.

"Celebrate life by giving and loving," says Azlina who would like to chip in and do her part to keep Langkawi clean and beautiful.



*Various types of geo-cookies that take the shape of Geopark rock formations.*





Geopark tour guide Othman Ayeb is a model dad to 18-year-old daughter Nur Wahyu Ramadah Othman.

This collegiate girl is doing her part to promote Langkawai UNESCO Global Geopark by drawing designs that feature patterns of trilobite and gastropod fossils found in the geopark.

This Spa management student is introducing Langkawi-inspired henna art after her dad, a nature guide and snake expert.

The teen showcased her skills at henna art at local carnivals and events and took part in the recent Geopark Conservation Day event organised by Langkawi Development Authority (LADA) at Taman Legenda in November.



"We see Arabic and Indian designs in henna art almost all the time. I want to do something a little different.

"I want to draw designs that represent my home," says the self-taught artist, who has been practising her henna art on her sisters and friends since she was 13.

Nur Wahyu, who dreams of opening her own art studio one day, says her parents - both Geopark Ambassadors - have been encouraging her to develop

her art and come out with creative ideas that could promote Langkawi and its geological heritage.

"I am trying out other designs. Maybe I can get inspiration from Langkawi's rock formation, mangrove forests, the eagles, snakes, corals, and other species that are endemic to Langkawi."

## Henna- painting

INSPIRED BY  
LANGKAWI FOSSIL DESIGNS



# Welcome to PATA Travel Mart 2018 LANGKAWI

### PATA Travel Mart 2018 in Langkawi

Malaysia will play host to the next Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) Travel Mart 2018 in Langkawi next year.

As the leading voice of tourism in Asia Pacific, the annual Travel Mart organised by PATA brings thousands of delegates to converge in a single tourism destination.

PATA CEO Dr Mario Hardy said delegates will experience one of Asia's most remarkable and attractive destinations. It is an opportunity for legendary Langkawi to showcase its culture, heritage, and beauty of its archipelago of 99 islands.

Langkawi, described as the 'Isle of Legends' and 'Jewel of Kedah', is one of the world's great paradise island getaways. A magnet for international eco-tourism, Langkawi is a UNESCO Global Geopark.



NATURALLY  
LANGKAWI







# Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark celebrates 10th anniversary

Langkawi Development Authority (LADA) has drawn up a series of activities to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark (LUGG).

This comprehensive year-long programme sees more exchange of geopark conservation knowledge that will put Malaysia's first global geopark and also Southeast Asia's first geopark on firmer footing and position it on a level playing field alongside established international geopark communities.

A six-month schedule between July and December comprising field visits abroad in China and South Korea are bound to cement Langkawi's prestigious status as the premier geopark site in the Asia Pacific region.

The first overseas trip is a visit by LUGG delegates to Zhijindong Cave to attend the 5th Asia Pacific Geopark Network Symposium of Zhijindong Cave UNESCO Global Geopark in the Guizhou Province, China, between 27 and 29 September.

Royal Patron of Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark Tunku Puteri Intan Safinaz Tuanku Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah, the Temenggong Kedah, is scheduled to grace another UNESCO Global Geopark (UGG) in Jeju, South Korea between 3 and 7 October.

Among activities in the pipeline are two Global Geopark Communication programmes with the Muroto UGG, Japan, and Gunung Sewu UGG, Indonesia.

On the home front, LUGG hosts a coral reef conservation programme in Pulau Dangli, off Langkawi in August and November.

Langkawi Development Authority (LADA) hosts the official opening ceremony of the 10th anniversary of LUGG on Aug 3.

Two months earlier, LADA organised a Geopark Day to engage the local

community to appreciate the achievement of its 10th anniversary on June 7.

Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark adviser Prof. Dr Ibrahim Komoo had on the occasion outlined the importance of LUGG and this was followed by a talk by Ustaz Mahmud Hassan who shed light on the linkage between human being and the environment from the Islamic perspective. At the event, LADA handed out uniforms to 21 Langkawi Global Geopark Ambassadors who are active local community leaders promoting geopark.

Meanwhile, the highlight of events that LADA has organised was the Second Regional Workshop of the Asia Pacific Geopark Network (AGPN) in Langkawi between May 8 and 12.

Some 47 delegates from seven countries, namely Malaysia, Myanmar, China, Japan, Taiwan, Thailand and



LADA CEO Dato' Haji Azizan Noordin (second from left) handed over a certificate of recognition to one of Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark ambassadors.



A group photo taken at the famous Langkawi Sky Cab.



Delegates at the Asia Pacific Geopark Network had a fruitful training session in Langkawi. Royal Patron of the Langkawi UNESCO Global Geopark Tunku Puteri Intan Safinaz Tuanku Abdul Halim Mu'adzam Shah, the Temenggong Kedah, graced the opening of the session



The 5-day APGN training course held in Langkawi served as an eye opener for some 47 delegates in the Asia Pacific region to share geopark knowledge.

Indonesia, took part in a five-day regional training course to discuss topics related to geoparks in the Asia Pacific to hone the skills and build capacity of Geopark stakeholders within the vast region. Tunku Puteri Intan was on hand to grace the opening ceremony.

Of the topics discussed were Chinese and Japanese geopark experience, field visits, governance, community engagement and public education field.

Also present at the course were Langkawi Development Authority (LADA) CEO Dato' Haji Azizan Noordin and LADA manager (Geopark Division and Conservation) Azmil Munif Mohd Bukhari.

Delegates upgraded their knowledge through talks and discussions and adjourned to the scenic Geopark sites at various locations in fun-filled activities with in-depth narrations from guided tours.

Among the places they visited on Geopark Day was the Skycab ride for a panoramic birds' eye view of Langkawi from vantage point on the platform at the peak of Gunung Machinchang.



## LADA CEO shares Langkawi vision

**D**ato' Azizan Noordin, the newly appointed Chief Executive Officer of Langkawi Development Authority, is a man of action and has set a fast pace for himself in his 100 days in office.

Within a short period, he has whipped up a calendar of 35 major events that averages 3 happenings per month to draw tourists in droves to the legendary Langkawi. The potent combination of global networking that he cultivated while serving as Tourism Malaysia Deputy Director-General (Marketing) coupled with his newly acquired skills as a fully registered tour guide is undoubtedly the key to success.

where2 speaks to Dato' Azizan recently and here's what he shares his vision for Langkawi.

**Q. Your 100 days as LADA CEO has come and gone. Within that short time, you have set the agenda and also the fast pace of work for yourself. Would you like to elaborate on the work in progress?**

I must admit that time really flies fast, especially when you are in the tourism industry. Time is crucial. You must be able to make a quick decision with a proven result. Tourism is a fast moving industry. People keep changing and you must be alert at all times.

Since taking office as the CEO of LADA, I have put up a Calendar of Events 2017 for Langkawi to ensure that the island continues to be an attractive destination for domestic and international tourists. I received so much support and help from old friends of the industry and by reconnecting with event organisers that I have worked before, I have made COE 2017 a reality. There are 35 exciting events lined up for 2017, ranging from international exhibitions, cultural and music festivals and sporting events. Some of these events are returning to Langkawi for yet another year whilst some are new events organized for the first time.

For 2017, we also plan 30 community events for Langkawi local community. These events are to nurture interest and participation of the local community in the tourism industry.

**On the administration side, you have beefed up your staff with officials who have adequate tourism-related experience those with whom you would not have had to waste time to move and act seamlessly along with you. Do you want to add?**

Yes. There have been several changes that I have made in order to make LADA

move at a faster pace to catch up with the constantly changing tourism industry. I have appointed officials from Tourism Malaysia who has vast experience to spearhead the Tourism Division into the next level.

**Q. You have decided to work and collaborate with international airlines to encourage them to jointly promote and to grow the airlines' presence in Langkawi. What is your target?**

I believe connectivity is vital to Langkawi's tourism progress. Especially Langkawi itself being an island, we need constant connectivity to and from other destinations around the world. The regional aviation industry in Asia is growing and is reaching smaller destinations. I hope that regional airlines would establish new routes, by then it can attract tourism, investment, and jobs. I had several meetings with airline operators and they sounded positive to make Langkawi one of their routes. There are clear signs that Langkawi needs more direct international flights to boost interest among foreigners to visit this Island.

**Q. You have mentioned the importance of attracting high-end travelers and international Vogue Magazine has voted Langkawi as the 6th hottest tourism destination for 2017. What are your plans to take tourism in Langkawi to the next level?**

Currently, Langkawi has been voted as the 6th hottest tourism destination 2017 alongside Bali, Hawaii, and Mauritius. With the COE 2017 in place, we hope to increase the number of tourist arrivals to Langkawi.



Currently, Langkawi receives about 2.4 million local visitors and 1.2 million international visitors per year. They enjoy very much its beaches, beauty and rich natural landscape, historical sites and attractions of food, culture, and shopping.

It is the aspiration of LADA to position Langkawi as the gateway to Southern Thailand and Koh Lipe as well as to the states of Kedah and Perlis in the Northern Corridor.

**Q. St Regis Langkawi has landed while Ritz Carlton, Langkawi, will soon open in July. These two international luxurious hotels speak well of how high-end travelers are receptive of Langkawi as the playground for the rich and famous. Would you like to share on what else coming in the near future?**

Hotels in Langkawi recorded occupancy rates of between 75% to 95% last year. Langkawi is known to be one of the hotel markets with the highest average daily rate (ADR) in the country and is expected to continue performing well in the coming years. The recent opening of St Regis Langkawi and other upcoming premium luxury brands will have a significant impact and broaden Langkawi's hotel market that was mainly dominated by the Four Seasons, Westin, Andaman and The Datai.

In the near future, Langkawi will have its first water theme park, that is the Langkawi Water Kingdom located in Kuah town. The water theme park which cost RM60 million will boost future tourism demand.

While the present Mahsuri International Exhibition Centre (MIEC) and Langkawi International Convention Centre (LICC) will continue to allow business and other types conferences to be held on the island, with its international standard facilities.



## Vision for Langkawi

**Q. Langkawi Tourism Blueprint 2.0 promises a purpose-driven programme to tap Langkawi's tourism potential to turn this archipelago of 99 islands in a top world destination. How would it succeed in a soft economic scenario?**

The Langkawi Tourism Blueprint (2011 to 2015) was officially launched on 8 December 2011 by the Prime Minister with the purpose of increasing tourist arrivals and spending and the targets of at least three million tourist arrivals and investment of at least RM5 billion, both of which have been achieved.

Tourist arrivals since 2012 have steadily risen from 3.06 million to 3.62 million in 2015, while investment rose from RM5.08 billion to RM11.9 billion. To further enhance tourism, the Langkawi Tourism Blueprint 2.0 (2016-2020) was drawn up and has been tabled to the Kedah State Government for recommendation before it will be discussed further at the Federal level.

**Q. How do you take advantage of a weakened Ringgit to make Langkawi conducive for more inbound travelers who would have a higher spending power to spend lavishly in Malaysia? Your say.**

At the moment, Malaysia is facing the ringgit's depreciation. The ringgit has hit an all-time low as compared to other known currencies. But not to worry, on the other hand, it will help boost competitiveness in export and attract tourist arrivals to the country. Similarly, Langkawi being a free duty island, the decline will attract foreign tourists because the island is cheaper and affordable. To the locals, traveling within the country is much better than having to travel overseas which is much more expensive.

**Q. Domestic visitors still form the bulk of tourists to Langkawi. Though they are not big spenders, nevertheless their visits keep tourism business afloat. What are plans to promote Langkawi locally?**

The majority of tourists to Langkawi are domestic tourists which made up of almost 70% of the total market. Most of them spend very few days in Langkawi and do their shopping and visiting attracting sites are their main objective.

Normally, domestic tourist arrivals peak towards the end of the year. There are plans to organise locally theme event throughout the year to attract them to visit Langkawi

from time to time. For instance, at the end of 2017, Ironman Triathlon will make a comeback for the 4th time.

Whilst for the first time, Langkawi International Bird Fair will make its way in November. This Bird Fair aims to highlight and showcase the different species of birds and promote the protection of birds, their habitats, encourage bird watching and ecotourism activities.

In December, Langkawi will be hosting two music concerts namely, The Langkawi Island Music Festival and The Langkawi International Blues Roots Aseana (Libra).

**Q. Are only world-class attractions such as Sky Bridge the way to go to showcase Langkawi's attractiveness while its natural beauty such as Global Geopark relegated to take on a role as second fiddle?**

As we are proud to have world-class attractions in Langkawi, there are more attractions in Langkawi, especially the natural beauty of the islands, which is the main source of tourism. We have suggested and implemented a bottom-up approach for future development that focuses on economic, social and environmental sustainability. This approach means the involvement of the local community in the decision-making process is crucial in directing Langkawi's development in days to come. We take account of suggestions of implementing zoning system based on supply, branding, and resources.

For example, the northwest area i.e. Pantai Kok, will be designated for luxury stay while Pantai Cenang area is for family recreational activities.

**Q. Local culture and its heritage should be regarded as the 'soul' of Langkawi. This seemed to have been sidelined in the quest for quick profit. What are your plans to resurrect this aspect of our culture?**

Kedah is known to be rich in its culture and heritage alike. It reflects a diversity and this can be seen in their arts, craft, food, songs and dances. Langkawi being part of Kedah reflects the same attractions. Located at Teluk Yu is the Langkawi Craft Complex that showcases many artistic local products such as batik painting, wood carvings, glass blowing, plaiting, and weaving.

The Ibrahim Hussein Museum and Cultural Foundation is located near Pantai

Pasir Tengkorak and houses many worthy art pieces by the late Ibrahim and collections of various other artists.

Laman Padi at Pantai Cenang is a rice museum where exhibits include rice planting tools, charts, photographs and various related artifacts. Visitors have the chance to participate in paddy planting activities during the paddy growing season.

In conjunction with Kedah's Art and Cultural programme in August, Langkawi Fest sets to transform this tranquil island into a vibrant hub of colourful decorations, live music, and joyous cultural performances. While in September, tourist and local residents will be able to see flying colourful kites with different shapes and sizes during the Langkawi International Kite Festival.

**Q. The call for Langkawi to embrace sustainable tourism practices is mounting. The Prime Minister has declared Langkawi should become the first carbon zero island in the country. What have been done in this aspect?**

There are steps being taken by the local government to achieve the first Malaysia's low-carbon status island by 2030 as has been declared by the Prime Minister recently. Apart from establishing Langkawi Municipal Council as the Secretariat for green practices, studies have been carried out to find ways and means to achieve the status.

According to the Member of Parliament for Langkawi, Yang Berhormat Dato' Ir Nawawi Bin Ahmad, a consultant has been appointed to help the island achieve the low-carbon status. Plans will be taken to support the national agenda to reduce carbon emissions to 40 per cent by the year 2020.

A feasibility study on Low Carbon Langkawi 2030 is being conducted in collaboration with the Government of South Korea using Jeju Island as a comparative benchmark. Langkawi could be a showcase for renewable energy, electric mobility, waste management and green buildings which would create more job opportunities for local people and increase the island's income by promoting green tourism.

Nawawi has urged the Federal Government to provide subsidies or allocations for green technology projects and suggested adopting the use of electric-powered motorcycles and later introducing electric cars over the next 5 years to 10 years.



*Satun Geopark from Thailand participated in the Langkawi Geo Festival by taking up an information booth.*



*Prof Ibrahim Komoo planting a tree assisted by a conservation staff at Frangipani Resort*



*Children taking part in a Geopark drawing competition during the Geopark Conservation Day in November 2016*



*Former LADA CEO Tan Sri Khalid Ramli and Azmil Munif Mohd Bukhari at the Press Conference announcing the Langkawi International Travel Awards 2015.*



## Photo Gallery



*Bikers among the 600 who turned up with their superbikes at the Royal Langkawi International Bike Fest 2017.*



*LADA CEO Dato' Azizan Nordin riding pillion on a superbike at the Royal Langkawi International Bike Fest 2017.*



*Tunku Puteri, accompanied by LADA CEO Dato' Azizan Nordin, visiting the 50 exhibits of vintage cars after officiating the opening of the Royal Langkawi Classic Cars Show 2017.*



*A Geopark family ... Nature guide and also Geopark Ambassador Othman Ayeb and his family members*



*One for the Album ... farewell group photo taken at San'in Kaigan Global Geopark in Japan*



*New Geopark Logo launch ... former LADA CEO Tan Sri Khalid Ramli striking a gong to launch the new logo with Prof Ibrahim Komoo standing behind*