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# Green escape for city folk

Enjoy outdoor activities and the flora and fauna at research institute

By **SHALINI RAVINDRAN**

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**L**IVING in the hustle and bustle of a major metropolitan city like Kuala Lumpur, the number of wide open spaces continue to dwindle as more high-rise buildings take its place.

But in the heart of a busy neighbouring township lies a haven for flora and fauna, that has remained largely untouched for the past 80 years.

The Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) is the country's largest secondary forest and is located in Kepong on the northern border of the Federal Territory of Kuala Lumpur and Selangor.

Since its establishment in 1929 by the British, its primary purpose has been to conduct research into forestry.

But a happy by-product of this work is a huge, publicly accessible swathe of greenery.

This 544.76ha of land is home to a large variety of plants and animals and is extremely popular among city folk.

FRIM charges a nominal fee for entry: Malaysians pay RM1 while non-Malaysians pay RM5. There is also a charge of RM5 for cars, vans and buses driving into the area.

There are a number of interesting activities in FRIM such as camping, bird-watching, jungle trekking, picnics near the waterfall, jogging and cycling.

If you are more inclined towards an educational stroll, visit the insect house and herbal botanical garden.

For a first-timer, a good way to explore FRIM is on bicycle. Visitors can either choose to bring their own or rent one at FRIM.

On weekends, bicycles are available for rent at RM8 for the first hour and RM2 for every subsequent hour. There is a variety of bicycles to choose from including children's bikes and those that come with child carriers.

If you decide to bring your own bicycle, be advised that there is a charge of RM3 per bike

per entry.

For more rugged activities, FRIM has a number of hiking trails that are clearly marked out.

Before starting out, grab a map at the One-Stop Service Centre (OSC) or alternatively, you can refer to the several layout maps of FRIM placed all over the park.

Some of the more popular trails are the Rover Track, Salleh Nature Trail and Keruing Trail.

A visit to FRIM must include the park's Canopy Walk, which is well worth the arduous climb.

Constructed in 1992, the purpose of the walkway is for the scientific study of flora and fauna.

This walkway system spans for 150m and is suspended between trees at approximately 30m above ground.

Enjoy panoramic views of the forest as well as glimpses of the Kuala Lumpur skyline in the distance as you walk amidst the treetops.

The Canopy Walk is open to the public from 9.30am to 2.30pm, with the last registration at 1.30pm. It is closed on Mondays and Fridays. Advance booking and purchase of tickets should be made at the OSC. Tickets are priced at RM5 for Malaysians and RM10 for non-Malaysians.

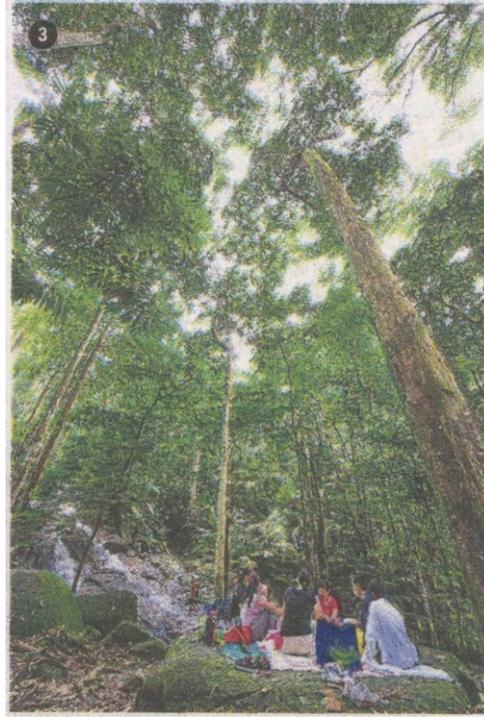
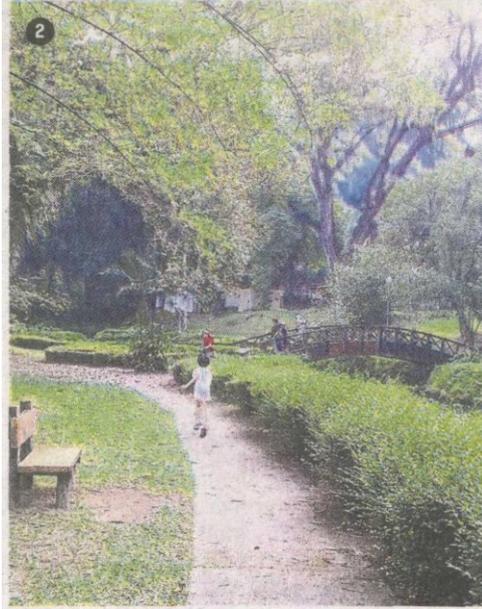
The hike up to the start of the walkway is fairly tough and physically challenging, so be sure that you are quite fit before you attempt this endeavour.

If you are looking to relax, FRIM has a number of picnic spots where you can while away the day. There is even a waterfall for

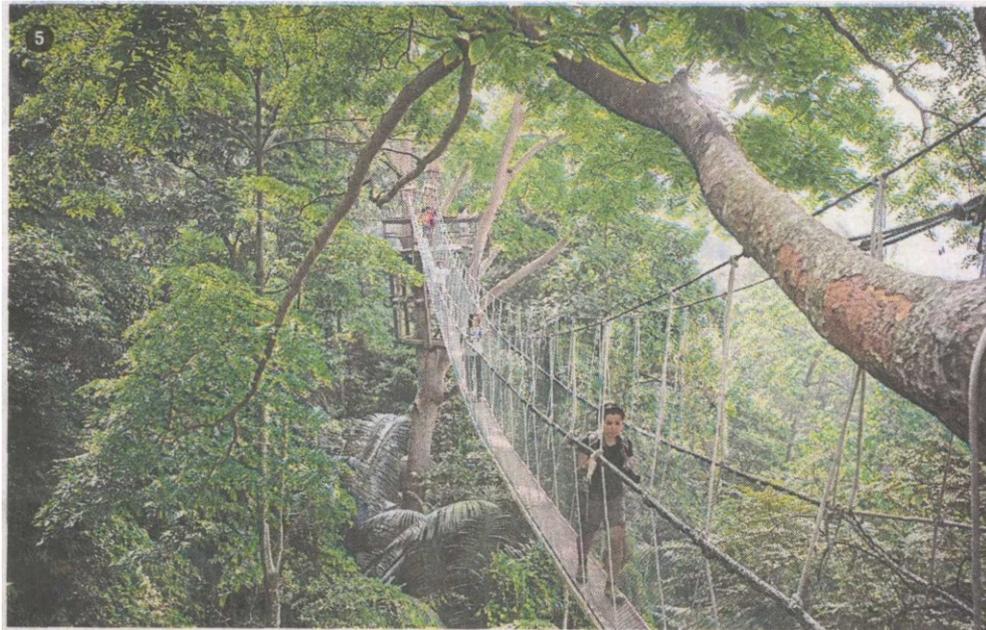
children to splash around in.

Getting to FRIM is fairly easy as it is accessible via the Middle Ring Road 2. Alternatively, take the KTM Komuter to Kepong Sentral Station. From there, you can get a taxi to FRIM for about RM7 to RM10.

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- 1 Another attraction at FRIM is "crown shyness" formed by the white meranti trees.
- 2 FRIM is a good place to bring children as there is much to do and explore.
- 3 FRIM has a number of picnic spots where you can while away the day. There is even a cooling waterfall for the children to splash around in.
- 4 A good way to explore FRIM is by bicycle. Visitors can either choose to bring their own bikes or rent them at FRIM on weekends.
- 5 The canopy walkway offers visitors a chance to walk amid the treetops and catch glimpses of the Kuala Lumpur skyline in the distance.