

Headline	FOOD FOR THOUGHT		
MediaTitle	New Sunday Times		
Date	05 Mar 2017	Color	Full Color
Section	Life & Times	Circulation	74,711
Page No	18,19	Readership	240,000
Language	English	ArticleSize	1741 cm²
Journalist	N/A	AdValue	RM 59,784
Frequency	Daily	PR Value	RM 179,352



“We welcome any effort to conserve nature.”

Suhainah Pejalis

Some of the trees to be planted. PICTURES BY ZULIANTIE DZUL AND BSFS

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

Team members from Brahim SATS Food Services set their sights on the wetlands as they strive to play their part in saving Mother Earth, writes Zuliantie Dzul



Ainul goes on a bicycle ride along the lake

“N O, it’s not Putrajaya Wetlands, it’s Paya Indah, in Dengkil,” I told my photographer that Saturday morning when he called to confirm the venue of our assignment. I don’t blame him though. Many people have actually mistaken Paya Indah Wetlands, about 30 minutes from Putrajaya, with the wetlands in the Federal Territory.

Paya Indah Wetlands is situated deep in the heart of Dengkil, a sub-district in the Sepang district of Selangor. There’s no beautiful landscape or fancy shopping malls nearby. The long and winding road, a kampung road if you must, that snakes about 7km from Dengkil town can easily make you miss the junction that leads to Paya Indah.

From there, it’s another few kilometres towards the main entrance of Paya Indah Wetlands. On my way there, I see plenty of tree stumps by the lake, near some tumbled trees. I later discover that this was caused by a big storm last month, so big that it managed to uproot some of the age-old trees around the area.

It’s this very incident that prompted a team from Brahim SATS Food Services (BSFS) to do something to help restore nature at Paya Indah.

Today, they’re planting new trees as part of their corporate social responsibility programme, Go Green — Let’s Save Our Planet Project, an initiative that’s fully supported by the **Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM)**.

PREMIER ECO-TOURISM PARK

Lotuses in the lake paints the view of Paya Indah Wetlands, offering a picture perfect canvas. Peacocks roam freely, flashing their mesmerising feathers. Two hundred and fifty species of birds also call this place home.

Juwita, Cendana, Lili and Baby are the four names to remember. They’re the four resident hippopotamuses in Paya Indah. Not far from their sanctuary, 52 saltwater crocodiles swim freely in the pond.

Divided into three zones — Recreational, Educational and Conservation & Research — Paya Indah Wetlands is Malaysia’s pre-

Headline	FOOD FOR THOUGHT		
MediaTitle	New Sunday Times		
Date	05 Mar 2017	Color	Full Color
Section	Life & Times	Circulation	74,711
Page No	18,19	Readership	240,000
Language	English	ArticleSize	1741 cm²
Journalist	N/A	AdValue	RM 59,784
Frequency	Daily	PR Value	RM 179,352



Paya Indah Wetlands is home to 52 crocodiles.



Participants listening to Dr Ahmad Nazarudin's explanation on tree planting.

mier eco-tourism park. Formerly a mining land from 1983 until 1997, it was gazetted as wetlands under the National Land Code 1965.

The government had spent millions rehabilitating this area, which is managed by Perhilitan since 2005 and opened to the public since 2008. It now covers 450.76 hectares, which consists of lakes, marshes and lowland tropical forest.

Wetlands are important for our survival. They are among the world's most productive environments; cradles of biological diversity that provide the water and productivity upon which so many species of plants and animals rely on for their survival.

The objectives of the Paya Indah Wetlands are to conserve marsh peat and ecosystem, raise public awareness on the importance of wetlands and develop research and educational activities related to the ecology of wetlands. It is also to provide recreational facilities to encourage the public's involvement in experiencing wetlands.

"We welcome any effort to conserve nature," says Suhainah Pejalas, deputy superintendent of Paya Indah Wetlands. "Other than nature, there are other activities you can do here, including hold a wedding!"

Efforts to conserve the ecosystem of Paya Indah are still ongoing, especially tree planting. This programme involves government and private agencies, universities and schools. So far, more than 90,000 trees have been planted.

SHARING KNOWLEDGE

Individuals and departments in BSFS donated some of the 160 trees to be planted here today. The trees include rare fruit trees such as cernai (gooseberry), delima

(pomegranate), putat (powder-puff), mentega (butter fruit), nam nam, kedondong and asam gelugor (tamarind peel), to name a few, which are easy to plant and maintain.

An expert from FRIM was invited to share his knowledge on tree planting and maintenance.

"We at FRIM support activities like this. It's really interesting that a company like **Brahim which deals with food has taken the initiative to save our Earth. So it's our responsibility to share knowledge with them today on tree planting, the how-to's, as well as the do's and don'ts,**" says FRIM's senior research officer Dr Ahmad Nazarudin Mohd Roseli.

He adds that the soil in Paya Indah is suitable for those trees.

"I've seen some greens around this area so that means the soil is good. If it's too sandy, it won't be able to hold water."

Dr Nazarudin, who has visited this place twice, believes that Paya Indah has a lot of potential to be tapped.

CLOSE TO NATURE

The BSFS participants, clad in their leafy green T-shirts, are raring to get down and dirty. Some are pushing wheelbarrows laden with seedlings, sacks of soil and compost. Others are already armed with their shovels and enthusiastically digging.

One of them is the CEO of BSFS, Ainal Hasnizam Abu Hassan, who's here with his family.

While the parents are occupied with planting trees, the kids take the opportunity to ride the rental bicycles and explore the area.

Paya Indah receives many visitors during the weekend and school holidays. It's a perfect place to hang out with the family. Besides cycling, one can also get up close

to the hippos during their feeding time at 10am daily and witness crocodile feeding at 11am on weekends and public holidays. Other activities include bird watching, camping and jungle trekking.

"I really like it here. It's very peaceful," confesses Suhainah, who had just been transferred from the Terengganu Perhilitan department a few weeks ago where she was the deputy director.

"Now I'm here to monitor and manage this place, among others."

LONG-TERM COMMITMENT

Beads of perspiration lining his forehead, Ainal heads over to the canopy for some respite from the sun, having spent a good part of the morning planting trees.

Smiling, he says: "I planted the putat tree just now. I didn't even know what it was at the beginning until Dr Nazarudin came to enlighten us. We've definitely learnt a lot today."

Everyone appears to be enjoying themselves and that's something that Ainal had hoped would happen.

"First and foremost, this is more about family gathering," he says, adding: "We do it every year. But this year, we are focusing more on the environment. This green campaign is a first for us."

Previously, BSFS was involved in building schools and suraus, *gotong royong* (communal work) and helping out at orphanages which they continue to do from time to time.

The Top Talent's Team at BSFS, comprising individuals selected through a talent management process and considered as future leaders of Brahim's, initiated the Go Green campaign.

"It's their brainchild," shares Ainal, who's been the CEO for the past three years.

"We chose this place because it's near to our office in KLIA2 at Sepang. When we found out about the storm and heard that the trees were uprooted, we grabbed the opportunity to have our green campaign here."

With Brahim for the last 12 years, Ainal admits to being a greenie, at home and in his office.

"If you come to our office, you can see a lot of trees and the landscape is nice and green. We're in the food business and our mission is to provide 'halalan toyyiban' (halal and good) products. But now, it's not just about food, it's about leading a good life too," he confides.

On the team's future plans, he shares: "InsyAllah (God willing), we'll work with animals next. We're planning to go to animal shelters."

He assures that this won't be their first and last day here as he plans to make it a monthly activity so the team can check on their trees and do other interesting activities that this place offers.

Concluding, Ainal says: "It's a long-term commitment and we hope we can sustain it. I also hope that many more corporate agencies will take the same initiative."

➔ nor.zuliantief@nst.com.my

Paya Indah Wetlands

Operational hour
Monday-Sunday: 7.30am-7pm
Friday: Closed from 12.15pm-2.45pm
Entrance fee
Free (register at the Information Centre before conducting any activities)

Paya Indah Wetlands is Malaysia's premier eco-tourism park.

