

Headline	GAMUDA LAND LISTENS TO NATURE		
MediaTitle	The Star		
Date	27 May 2019	Color	Full Color
Section	Nation	Circulation	175,986
Page No	14,15	Readership	527,958
Language	English	ArticleSize	2023 cm <sup>2</sup>
Journalist	N/A	AdValue	RM 101,810
Frequency	Daily	PR Value	RM 305,430

# GAMUDA LAND LISTENS TO NATURE

IN a world fraught with worries pertaining to climate change and unsustainability, it is refreshing to hear of property developers championing green initiatives and integrating sustainable practices into their work.

While many green initiatives in the market focus on post construction, Gamuda Land goes a step further, taking biodiversity into their hands right from the start. As early as last May, Gamuda Land set up Gamuda Parks, a sustainable landscaping initiative, doing its part for nature and the environment by focusing on creating towns with balanced ecosystem.

Mandated to deliver, implement, manage, maintain and safeguard the long-term well-being of the environment, Gamuda Parks is governed by three main pillars: green (flora maintenance), blue (waterscapes such as lake and pond designs), and brown (material management). These areas were referenced in the UN Sustainable Development Goals and also the 11th Malaysia Plan's Fifth Pillar of Enhancing Environmental Sustainability through Green Growth.

"Listening to what the land has to tell us has been one of our key town-making principles. It sees us study the natural topography of the land, put in thoughts and effort to integrate the natural with the man-made. We adopt sustainable landscaping which includes planting native species in the hope of creating conducive environment with balanced ecosystem that may promote growth of fauna like attracting migratory birds to come back," said Gamuda Parks Chief Operating Officer Khariza Abd Khalid during a media briefing at the Gamuda Gardens Experience Gallery in Sungai Buloh, Selangor.

Since the inception of Gamuda Parks, three biodiversity audits have been carried out in Valencia, its 15-year-old township in Sungai Buloh, as well as newer townships Gamuda Gardens and Gamuda Cove.

"These audits were conducted by our expert advisors so that we can monitor the health of the environment from time to time. With the results, we will be more informed in making sustainable decisions in terms of design, development and maintenance of our townships' environment," she said.

These experts include researchers from Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM), consulting firm AGV Sustainability and ESG Services, and Wetlands International Malaysia.

"In older townships like Valencia, we focus on improving our landscape maintenance so that the biodiversity indicator will sprawl with more enriching fauna species years later. While in Gamuda Cove and Gamuda Gardens that have the benefit of a fresh palette, we focus on laying a strong foundation, like planning out the landscape with the right

plant species, even before any earthworks begin," she added.

Khariza drew the example of Gamuda Cove, where the team encountered *Melicope lunu-akenda*, a tree species listed endangered on the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List, which will be tagged, transplanted and included in the development of Gamuda Cove.

"These are the right things to do for the environment and we want to document it formally into Gamuda Parks policy, which in a way is sustainable because it increases the transparency of our commitment and acts as a legacy for future generations," she said.

## Gamuda Parks policy

AGV Sustainability and ESG Services' role comes to light in producing Gamuda Parks policy, according to its director and principal consultant Datin Dr Vijayalakshmi Samuel.

"Gamuda Parks policy mainly addresses biodiversity, which will be used by Gamuda Land as a guiding principle moving forward," she said.

She explained that her team went through all the initiatives and programmes that the developer has done to date. To her surprise, she felt that the developer has been doing a lot for the environment, and it is timely for Gamuda Land to turn its practices into policy.

"The policy speaks volumes of Gamuda Land as the custodian of nature. One of the interesting things about the policy is that it is adapted from the UN Sustainability Development Goals or SDGs. The UN has 17 SDGs towards building a sustainable world and we have proposed that Gamuda Parks adopt nine of these," she said.

The nine SDGs are good health and well-being; clean water and sanitation; industry, innovation and infrastructure; sustainable cities and communities; responsible consumption and production; climate action; life below water; life on land; and quality education.

## Keeping tabs

FRIM's Flora Biodiversity Programme for Forest Biodiversity Division head Dr Richard Chung and a colleague who is an arborist have been tasked with flora and fauna assessments at the said developments.

They also reviewed Gamuda Gardens and Gamuda Cove's design masterplan and advised on plant selection for increasing biodiversity, as well as worked with Gamuda Parks on formulating the policy and a maintenance manual.

"The audit will be done every five or 10 years. Among the scientific assessments done are measuring the dimensions and heights of trees, as well as tracking animal droppings and footprints," said Dr Chung.

"It is not common for developers



Gamuda Land's township Valencia in Sungai Buloh, Selangor, was designed and developed according to the topography of the land.



(From left) Khariza, Vijayalakshmi, Keizrul and Chung, whose organisations work together to ensure that biodiversity is maintained in Gamuda Land's development projects.

to adopt research element in monitoring flora and fauna of their developments. What's more our expertise and advice will also help in Gamuda Land's landscape planning for new townships. For example, some native trees may not be suitable for certain areas, like some could shed too many leaves or produce sap that drips onto the ground, making them unsuitable for residential planting, but could work in the park areas," he added.

## Water first

"When Gamuda Parks came to us last year, we were very excited to be able to work together on how wetlands and water can become part of urban township," said Wetlands International Malaysia chairperson Datuk Paduka Ir Dr Keizrul Abdullah.

"You need to start planning with water first, as water will not follow your plans – it follows gravity."

Keizrul commended Gamuda Land on focusing on water first – as practised in Gamuda Gardens and Gamuda Cove – before developing other aspects.

He shared how Gamuda Land had introduced a series of ponds that function in different ways. "During construction, the pond acts as a secretion pond, and when construction is completed, it becomes a recreational pond. It can also help reduce floods as a flood retention pond. Our part is recommending the wetlands construction engineering as well as the planting of water-based plants to improve water quality."

## Eco envoys

Gamuda Parks policy also spells out its commitment to inform and educate Malaysians on the importance of biodiversity and sustainability.

A good way to instil awareness is

through education, creative programmes and strategic events like the eco-friendly Earth Day Run which was held on April 28 by National Geographic in partnership with Gamuda Land. Runners were encouraged to bring their own reusable drink bottles which they refilled at water stations along the route.

Gamuda Land introduced the 2km category for children aged six to 12 to celebrate the debut of its GPartners Rangers Programme.

During the run, a booth was set up to showcase Gamuda Parks' initiatives while distributing packets of *kailan* and water convolvulus (*kangkung*) seeds to kids to plant in pots and then take home.

"One man alone isn't enough to create a change. To do that, we have to reach out to the public and it's far more effective if we get younger generations involved in the effort."

"Through GPartners Rangers, we



Headline	GAMUDA LAND LISTENS TO NATURE		
MediaTitle	The Star		
Date	27 May 2019	Color	Full Color
Section	Nation	Circulation	175,986
Page No	14,15	Readership	527,958
Language	English	ArticleSize	2023 cm <sup>2</sup>
Journalist	N/A	AdValue	RM 101,810
Frequency	Daily	PR Value	RM 305,430



Aerial view of the Paya Indah Wetlands adjacent to Gamuda Cove. Gamuda Parks has ensured the protection of the endangered forest tree species *Melicope lunu-akenda* in Gamuda Cove.



'Before we start earthwork activities, we will work with experts to audit the land,' said Khariza.

will expose our young ambassadors to nature workshops and programmes for free, where they learn to check water quality, waste management, composting, even making soap out of cooking oil, among others. We believe that by fostering care for nature and the environment early, they will grow to be more environmentally-conscious," said Khariza.

The GParks Rangers Programme is open to children aged five to 12. The next event that the Rangers can participate in will be the International Biodiversity Day celebration, to kick off on May 27. This year's theme will be *Our Biodiversity, Our Food, Our Health*.

The International Day for Biological Diversity sanctioned by the United Nations is held by Gamuda Land in partnership with Universiti Teknologi Mara, National Autism Society of Malaysia (Nasom) and EcoKnights. Activities include a nature workshop for children, a biodiversity art exhibition, story-telling, a green market and environmental talks.

Find out more about the events at Gamuda Land Facebook page or log on to <https://gamudaland.com.my/gamudaparks/>



Sightings of the Black-naped oriole have been rare in urban cities, but the bird is commonly spotted in Valencia.



The GParks Rangers Programme educates the young Rangers to be conscious of the environment.