



# KERATAN AKHBAR

SURAT KHABAR	:	THE STAR		
TARIKH	:	17/12/2019	MUKA SURAT	: 16
JABATAN	:	PERHILITAN		
KLASIFIKASI	:	<b>PERHATIAN</b>		

## Taman Negara needs much better care

TAMAN Negara in Kuala Tahan, Pahang, is easily one of Asia's best national parks. A lush tropical rain-forest that's said to be 130 million years old, it is a paradise with good facilities and infrastructure.

My favourite points are still the canopy walkway, river boat picnic trip to Lata Berkoh, visit to the aboriginal village, night walk and trekking to the peak of Mt Tahan, which takes six days (full of sweat and adventure!). This park, which easily qualifies as a natural World Heritage site, is home to a incredible array of flora and fauna that includes endangered tigers, elephants, gaur, tapir and is also one of the best birding sites in Asia.

My family and I have just returned from a great holiday there. The forest trekking, animal

and bird sightings were amazing. The park was pristine and beautiful. The staff at the park's only five-star hotel where we were put up were very helpful and friendly.

However, we were dismayed to hear that the entry price to the park will be increased to RM30 from only RM1. This is a drastic increase of 30 times. It will definitely affect the number of tourists visiting this beautiful heritage spot. Was there research done or was it an ad hoc decision?

Also distressing was the fact that the Tembeling River, despite the rainy season, was reddish brown in colour and was polluted with sediment, indicating there is a lot of unwarranted activities upstream. We were told that there is heavy logging on the opposite

side of Taman Negara. I actually saw the evidence – several lorries overloaded with logs – when I took the road out of Taman Negara. Is there any control of logging that affects Taman Negara? The state government must be proactive on conservation.

Isn't the state government interested in preserving these age-old forests which are part of the state's rich ecosystem? Who is behind these logging activities? An explanation by the Forestry Department is due too.

The Department of Environment (DOE) should inspect the Tembeling River immediately and take samples to test the water quality. The DOE should perform due diligence and publish a study on the effects of logging immediately. I am surprised

that Wildlife Department (Perhilitan) is keeping quiet on this issue which will affect the flow of tourists. This is my 34th visit to Taman Negara and I was very disturbed by the river pollution. When will Malaysians learn to truly love their environment, especially our leaders and those departments assigned to be custodians of our green spaces?

Finally, why is this beautiful park not designated a natural heritage site? This would assure its sustainability in terms of activities and control as well as attract tourists. The Wildlife Department should take the lead. We naturalists have waited for too long.

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