



## KERATAN AKHBAR

AKHBAR	:	THE STAR (ECOWATCH)			
TARIKH	:	20/8/2019	MUKA SURAT	:	4
JABATAN	:	PERHILITAN			
KLASIFIKASI	:	<b>PERHATIAN</b>			

# Walking the talk to save tigers

This company's employees hold the Malayan tiger close to their hearts and are willing to trek miles to help save the threatened big cat.

By SIM LEOI LEOI  
star2@thestar.com.my

HEARING how Maybank staff members walked a total of more than 6,000km – more than eight times the length of the North-South Expressway, from Bukit Kayu Hitam in Kedah to Johor Baru – you could almost hear strains of the triumphant *Eye Of The Tiger* song playing in the background...

Ah, but these folk also have an eye “out” for the Malayan tiger.

Joining Perhilitan (Department of Wildlife and National Parks) and WWF-Malaysia on patrols in

the Royal Belum-Temenggor Forest reserve – where experts say the population of wild cats has shrunk to a miserable 23 – Maybank teams dig up snares set by poachers and report wildlife crime to authorities.

Teams have found and deactivated 48 wire snares and one mist nest (an almost invisible net that's strung between trees), and detected 256 old snares, 37 old mist nests, four active and 97 old poaching campsites and 16 hunting hides, and recorded seven bullet shells. They have also reported 37 wildlife crimes to Perhilitan; eight were acted upon.



One of the Maybank teams helping to set up a camera trap in the jungle to document tiger movements. A staff member is roleplaying the animal in front of the camera to test its position. – Maybank

For the staff members and Maybank Foundation CEO Shahril Azuar Jimin, the conservation of tigers is close to their hearts, as the animal features on the bank's logo.

“From the start, the founders of Malayan Banking Bhd (later Maybank) chose the tiger as a symbol of courage and strength,” said Shahril.

“That seemed to have worked very well,” he added, pointing to the bank's expansion around the country as well as overseas.

Within the first year of its founding in 1960, the bank was already opening branches. The first branch was established on Jalan Tun HS Lee in Kuala Lumpur; within the same year, a branch was opened in Singapore.

Today, Maybank is Malaysia's largest bank, with total assets exceeding US\$165bil (RM692bil), 2,400 offices worldwide – including in Britain, Cambodia, China, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Singapore, United States and Vietnam – and some 45,000 employees. The Maybank Foundation is the main implementer of the Maybank Group's community programmes, including the tiger conservation efforts.

While the continued existence of tigers is extremely important to Maybank – it has even developed an internal set of values called Tiger Values for its staff – Shahril thinks the animal's preservation is even

more important to the country as a whole.

“Because the tiger is synonymous with Malaysia!

“It is, in the first place, on our coat of arms, the crest of Malaysia (and) we have the tiger in all our key sports, our logos, emblems (and on) our jersey, even our national car,” he pointed out.

The Maybank Foundation has been supporting tiger conservation since 2009, when it contributed RM1mil to establish MyCat, the Malaysian Conservation Alliance for Tigers.

Shahril said the foundation feels there is still much more to be done to garner support for and awareness of the project, which is now partnered with WWF-Malaysia.

“It's a four-year partnership that began in 2016, for which our contribution is RM5.12mil,” he said.

This partnership, added Shahril, is based on three pillars: protection, monitoring, and community engagement. Fostering community engagement resulted in the first “Malayan Tiger Run 2019 – Roar For Life!” event in Putrajaya in conjunction with Global Tiger Day, which is marked on July 29.

Part of the foundation's ramped up efforts to garner community support for MyCat, the 5km fun run on July 28 saw some 4,100 participants sprinting through obstacles courses designed to reflect threats tigers face

in the wild, such as depleting habitats, dwindling prey animal number and poaching – the last, for instance was played out by people dressed up as poachers “shooting” the runners with water guns.

The Tiger Run was supported by the Water, Land and Natural Resources Ministry and Perhilitan.

Shahril said the foundation hopes that the event, as well as others like it, will help efforts to double the estimated population of 200 Malayan tigers in the wild by 2022 in line with the declaration by the Global Tiger Summit in St Petersburg, Russia, in 2010.

The year 2022 was chosen because it is the Year of the Tiger according to the Chinese zodiac.

While countries like Nepal and India have managed to somewhat arrest – and even reverse – the decline of their wild tigers, sadly, that is not the case in Malaysia.

It is for this reason that the Maybank Foundation is backing a call by WWF-Malaysia for a National Tiger Task Force to be set up, chaired by the Prime Minister, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, to act as a steering body in saving this animal.

“WWF-Malaysia is doing that and we are supporting it,” said Shahril.

When it comes to protecting the Malayan tiger, the Maybank Foundation seems to be walking the talk.