

NEWS CLIPPING

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Teaching the young about river conservation

ECO FRIENDS: River Carnival empowers the public, especially children, to protect and conserve Malaysia's water resources, particularly the rivers

FAIRUZ MOHD SHAHAR

OVER 4,000 visitors flocked to the Zoo Negara recently to enjoy fun and educational activities at GAB Foundation's River Carnival.

The event saw families participating in various games and hands-on activities that aimed at educating and empowering the public to protect and conserve Malaysia's water resources, particularly the rivers.

The event was jointly organised by GAB Foundation and its non-governmental organisation partner, Global Environment Centre. Since 2007, they have been at the forefront of river rehabilitation and conservation through the Foundation's WATER project.

It was its third and largest River Carnival ever held.

The first and second carnival were held at Sungai Way where the river was successfully rehabilitated.

The carnival was launched by Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment Malaysia deputy secretary-general Datuk Dr Mohd Ali Mohamad Nor.

Also present were Malaysian Zoological Society deputy president Datuk Zaharin Md Arif and GAB Foundation chairman Tan Sri Saw Huat Lye.

Dr Ali said the river played an important role in shaping economic, social and cultural aspects of life.

"Ninety-seven per cent of our supply comes from rivers and streams. Our water supply will be under pressure in the coming years as our country's economic development, population, industrialisation and urbanisation increase. Due to these factors, our rivers are severely polluted.

"By raising the level of awareness and understanding on the issues faced by rivers, the government can stimulate the community to change their behaviour and habits which negatively impact the river systems," he said.

Saw said GAB Foundation and Global Environment Centre strived to develop and support community-based initiatives in river rehabilitation and conservation.

"The River Carnival aims to educate the public, especially the young, to learn about conserving and protecting our rivers from pollution.

"The carnival marks our continued commit-

ment to expand our river rehabilitation efforts. We feel that Zoo Negara is an ideal place because it has a big number of visitors, especially on weekends.

"We will continue to share our ideas on environmental conservation to a wider audience. We have already started working with the Department of Irrigation and Drainage Malaysia on future river rehabilitation and water conservation initiatives," he said.

The visitors of all ages were treated to interactive workshops, exciting games and role play relating to river conservation.

Among activities lined up were River Hunt, Young River Scientist Programme, The River Musical, Storytime with Gabby, Recycle Art and Paper-Folding Workshop and Kids Activity Corner.

The River Hunt saw teams of teenagers took on an amazing race-

cum-treasure hunt where they had to complete tasks relating to river, water and bio-diversity. The participants were exposed to fun river facts and information.

The teams consisted of five to 10 members. The fastest team to complete the river-related mission won RM1,000 in Aeon cash vouchers and goodie bags.

The Young River Scientist Programme is an enriching session where participants aged between 3 to 15 years learnt more about rivers in a practical way.

Donning the lab coats, the "river scientists" were exposed to scientific studies of river, from testing the quality of rivers to learning about different organisms.

To add to the excitement, they also learnt how to create soaps and candles out of cooking oil. Upon completing the programme, the "river scientists" got free exclusive ecobag.

The River Musical was a specially produced skit on river-related stories where the actors spread the message of environmental protection.

The Storytime with Gabby saw preschoolers gathering for an interesting storytelling session by GAB Foundation's crew who called them-

selves Gabby.

The story was to educate children on the water lifecycle and the significance of conserving water and river.

Children also attended the Recycle Art and Paper-Folding Workshop, where they were taught to use recycled items to create beautiful crafts.

Old newspapers, coloured papers and plastics were used for origami and made into flowers, butterfly, birds, frogs and fishes.

The Kids Activity Corner offered a variety of amusing activities for families and kids. There were face-painting, caricatures by professional artists, Crazy Ball, Golf Game, Bottle Fishing, Slam Dunk and more.

The presence of clowns and magicians added to the festivity.

A visitor from Petaling Jaya, Nurul Aida Kamaruddin, 26, came with her two-year-old daughter, Aleysha Mohd Romzi.

"The activities here are impressive as they make children learn about conserving the environment.

Linda Lee Al Ling, 37, described the carnival as fun and enriching.

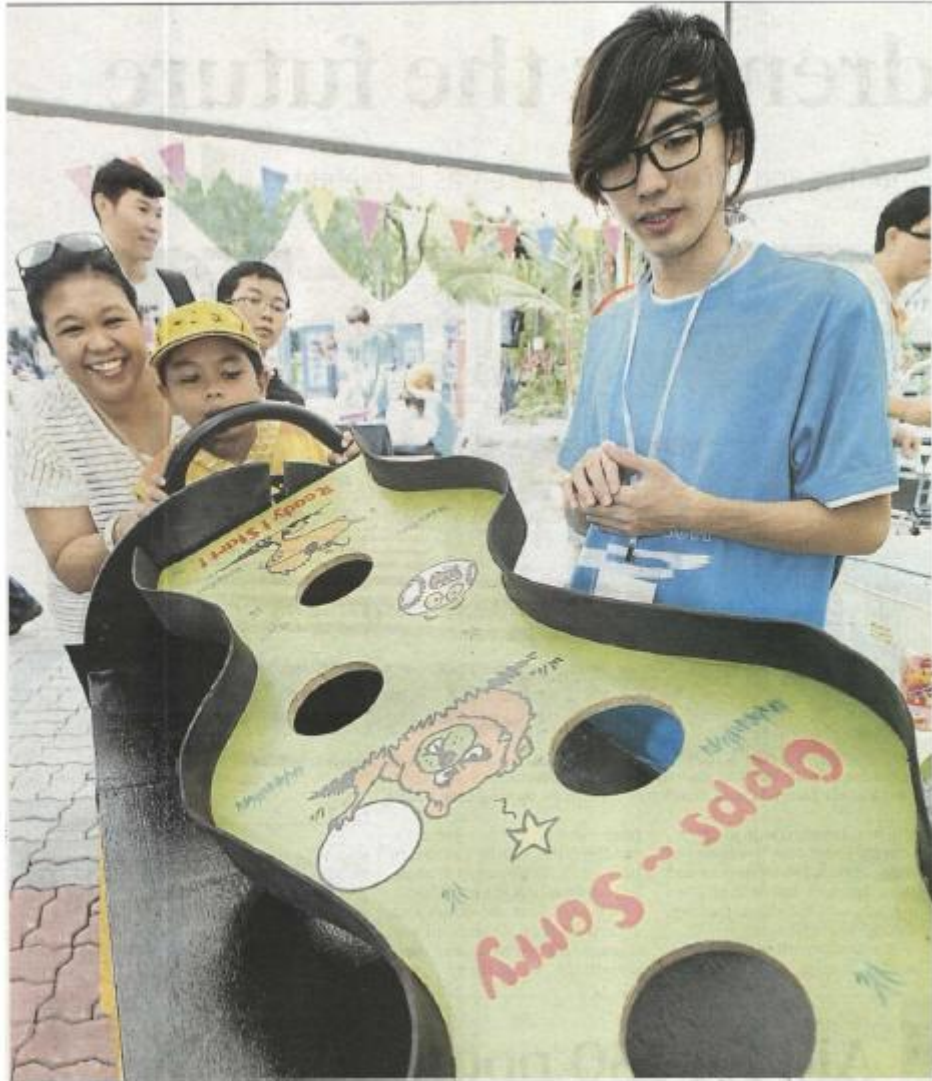
"My two kids enjoyed the Recycle Art and Paper-Folding Workshop the most as they love arts. The workshop is good as it encourages the young generation to use recycled items and in the process help to heal the environment," she said.

Nur Amira Atiqah Adnan, 13, who came from Raub, Pahang with her family said she gained valuable information on river conservation.

"I learnt that rubbish must be disposed of at a proper place, not into the river. People must change their bad habit as river pollution will affect humans, animals and nature," she said.

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Nur Amira Atiqah Adnan,
student



*A mother and her son **enjoying** a game.*



Datuk Dr Mohd Ali Mohamad Nor (left) and Tan Sri Saw Huat Lye (right) at the **river conservation exhibition**.



A visitor trying to **fish a bottle** at the Kids Activity Corner.



Children are taught to use **recycled items** to create **beautiful artworks** at the Recycle Art and Paper-Folding Workshop.



A child trying his hand at the **Crazy Ball** game.



Tan Sri Saw Huat Lye (standing, fourth from left), **Datuk Dr Mohd Ali Mohamad Nor** (fifth from left), and **Datuk Zaharin Md Arif** (sixth from left) with the **theatre crew of River Musical**. Pix by Mustaffa Kamal