

Locals urged to preserve Semadang River for future generations

KUCHING: The upper Sarawak Kiri River, which is also known as Semadang River, must be preserved, protected and restored for the sake of future generations.

Assistant Minister of Transportation Datuk Dr Jerip Susil said Semadang River, which has played a pivotal role in the lives of those who inhabit the surrounding area, can be a game changer for the tourism industry in the area if big strides are taken to turn the river into a tourist attraction.

Its unique characteristics include the spectacular scenery along the Semadang River, with dense forest lining both sides of the river, huge outcrops of rocks along various stretches of the rivers and mountain system, as well as the river system which is home to many species of fish.

“So I call upon the riverine community right from Kampung Rais down to Kampung Git to treat Semadang River as their heritage and help to preserve, protect and save the river from destruction for your future generations.

“The river, if well preserved and protected can become the focal point of tourism not just in the area but also in Kuching,” he said at the official launch of the

3rd Semadang Tagang Festival at Kampung Semadang near here on Saturday night.

Dr Jerip, who is also Mambong assemblyman, said Semadang River is already a focal point for local and international bamboo rafting enthusiasts, competing in the annual Padawan Raft Safari.

He said the much awaited annual event offered plenty of fun and adventure for all nature

lovers, who will not only get to see the great scenery and get close to nature during the ride down the river, but also take in the breathtaking view of the evergreen jungles and a number of rapids along the route.

“And now, Kampung Semadang has added another special attraction by organising the annual Tagang Festival.

“This festival gives people the opportunity to participate in the various river sports and recreational activities such as rafting, kayaking and fishing competition,” he said.

The tagang system is a community-based fisheries resource management system practised by many riverine communities. It is a stakeholder-driven system of rehabilitation, protection and conservation of the river environment and fishery resources for sustainable development.

Dr Jerip said the fate of Semadang River and its ecosystem partly lies in the hands of the local riverine communities.

He said while quite often, full restoration is not possible due to permanent changes in local land use, riverine communities could rehabilitate the river system in some way to improve its environmental value — for example, improving the habitat to increase fish numbers.

He also called upon the riverine communities not to poison or ‘tuba’ the fish.

“You may use fishing rods and lines or dive, but do not use ‘tuba’ because by doing so you are destroying all the fish in the river system,” he said.

Dr Jerip noted that the successful organisation of the Semadang Tagang Festival for three consecutive years showed that there were fishes in the Semadang River.

He believed that the fishes living in the river include the 50,000 fish fry which he had released there over 10 years ago.

On Saturday, the Agriculture Department released another 30,000 ‘lampan jawa’ fish fry into the river.



Dr Jerip (second left) witnesses the sponsorship presentation from UCSI University Sarawak Campus chief operating officer Mukvinder Sandhu (third right) to Kampung Semadang village head Samsom Manggang (second right) while Dr Jerip's wife Datin Lee Chai Foong (left) looks on. UCSI is sponsoring prizes in the form of scholarships to the top three winners of the Miss Tagang Beauty Pageant.