

# Travel operators eager to spotlight hidden gems

By HO JIA WEN

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**KUALA LUMPUR:** From the picturesque mountain ranges to coffee trails and the archaeological wonders of Lenggong Valley, Malaysia has many hidden gems travel operators are striving to promote.

With this mission in mind, Malaysia Association of Hotels (MAH) vice-president Datuk Khoo Boo Lim said the inaugural MAH Domestic Tourism Fair 2024 served as a platform to connect travellers with fun local getaways.

“We are showcasing Malaysia’s lesser-known treasures, such as our scenic mountain ranges. There are lots to see in our country,” he said at the fair here yesterday.

Among the unique experiences featured was a glamping adventure in Lenggong, a Unesco World Heritage Site known for its archaeological significance, including the discovery of Perak Man, South-East Asia’s oldest most complete human skeleton.

“This location offers a serene and pristine environment, and it only became more popular about two years ago,” shared local travel executive Norafidah Mohd Azman.

She said visitors can also opt for a historical journey encompass-



**Celebrating diversity:** A group of dancers comprising DBKL staff members wearing traditional garments at the MAH Domestic Tourism Fair at Pavilion Bukit Jalil, Kuala Lumpur. — FAIHAN GHANI/The Star

ing a tour of the Lenggong Valley Archaeological Gallery, a river cruise and visits to caves adorned with prehistoric paintings.

For those seeking immersion in nature, a stay on a houseboat in

the Royal Belum Rainforest is an option, complete with opportunities for wildlife spotting during a six-hour hike.

“Many wild animals like tigers and tapirs will head to the area, so

there is a chance to spot them.”

Additionally, Norafidah said visitors have the rare opportunity to see the Rafflesia, the world’s largest flower, which blooms unpredictably.

For coffee lovers, sales executive Nabihah Syazwani said they can indulge in coffee trail packages, one of which brings tourists from Bukit Mertajam in Penang to Arau, Perlis.

“Visitors can see everything from how coffee beans are grown to traditional and modern ways of roasting coffee to drinking a cup themselves,” she said.

Nabihah said the tour packages have attracted both locals and foreigners alike, and many are amazed by the quality of Malaysian coffee.

Meanwhile, in Sabah, one of the tea plantations offers a more immersive experience by allowing visitors to stay on the farm itself.

“Our stay package also includes tea picking, a tea factory tour and a visit to a tree house,” said one of its supervisors, Sinim Giking.

The accommodation is a cosy cottage-like home that offers stunning mountain vistas, complete with traditional meals and fresh tea, she said.

The fair, held over the weekend with support from Tourism Malaysia, drew over 15,000 visitors on its first day.

It featured 150 exhibitors, offering a wide variety of hotel accommodations, travel experiences and tour packages from across Malaysia.