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## Exploration centre to beguile visitors

LOCATED near the sprawling entrance of the Paya Indah Wetlands is an Exploration Centre which allows visitors to feast their senses on a whole host of interactive and educational activities.

The centre opened its doors for the first time yesterday to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and some 400-odd guests.

Dr Mahathir had earlier received a symbolic key in a handing-over ceremony from a representative of the Japanese Government, which had donated more than RM200,000 to purchase exhibits for the centre.

The centre, begins with the story behind the wetlands, aptly entitled the "Journey of Paya Indah".

Depicting the history and conception of the idea behind the rehabilitation of the wetlands, viewers are shown the step-by-step reconstruction of the barren and degraded mining land in Kuala Langat into the beautiful and picturesque park seen today.

An historical backgrounder on the Kuala Langat tin mines featuring the legacy of the mining process and its results is also presented.

There are exhibits on wetlands around the world, with a selection of insects and butterflies found here.

Adults and children will be able to learn more about water cycles and the various eco-systems of the wetlands, peat swamps, mining lakes and open lakes.

A complete list of flora and fauna present at the wetlands is listed in posters.

Animals found here include birds and fish, crocodiles, hippopotami, swampdeer and cranes.

The centre also has a picture gallery filled with photographs of the wetlands taken by famous local photographers.

Another unique attraction at Paya Indah is the Palm Garden, with one of the largest collections of palms in the world.

Some 1,000 palms from 83 species of six climatic zones will be grown here.

There is also a Malay heritage house called the Rumah Melayu showcasing its architecture.

It is located on a hill overlooking the Chalet Lake.

The house was prefabricated in Terengganu and later shifted to its present location.

Besides the menagerie of wildlife, the wetlands also offers peace and tranquility in the form of 14 former mining tin pools.

Transportation modes such as mountain bikes, horse carriages as well as canoeing and kayaking through lakes will help ease a visitor's need to traverse the park's vast distances.

Nature lovers and enthusiasts will also be able to participate in jungle walks and jungle survival courses organised by the wetlands administrators.

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