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Langkawi as charming as ever

LANGKAWI, the emerald enchantment of the north, is a safe and warm place to spend the school holidays.

Why bother travelling abroad when Langkawi has so much to offer including many tourists attractions, fantastic accommodation and affordable resorts?

Hollywood stars such as Jodie Foster, heads of state, kings and queens along with other celebrities have come to Langkawi, the duty free haven, for well-deserved breaks and it is no wonder that many Malaysians too have taken to the island in a big way.

Annually, 1.9 million tourists visit Langkawi with 1.7 million being Malaysians. This goes to show no matter what critics say, the island hasn't lost its sparkle.

To date, the Langkawi Development Authority (Lada) has spent more than RM1 billion on developing the island and this has helped to woo tourists. Lada also ensures Langkawi has a variety of tourism products.

Some of the attractions include the cable car project, Eagle Square, Galeria Perdana, Laman Padi Langkawi, Makam Mahsuri, Air Hangat Village, Pulau Payar Marine Park, Tasik Dayang Bunting amongst others.

The cable car ride takes visitors up to Gunung Machinchang and from the peak, they will have a view of the whole island, the Datai Peninsula, Andaman Sea and the southern Thai island of Ko Terutai and also the coastline of the southern Thai province of Satun, on a clear day.

Eagle Square is Langkawi's prominent landmark for visitors arriving by sea. Situated at Kuah Jetty, the main attraction is the magnificent statue of a reddish brown eagle poised for flight.

According to folklore, Langkawi derived its name from the eagle or "helang". In old Malay, kawi is reddish brown and Langkawi means reddish brown eagle.

As for Galeria Perdana, the gallery houses the awards, souvenirs and gifts received from world leaders, statesmen as well as Malaysians for former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Pulau Payar Marine Park, where shark feeding takes place, teems with a fascinating diversity of marine life while Tasik Dayang Bunting (Lake of Pregnant Maiden), nestling in lush forested hills on an island south of Langkawi, is the largest lake on the island.

The outline of the hills and rocky outcrops on one side of the lake resembles the shape of a pregnant woman lying on her back.

The marine showcase, Underwater World of Langkawi, features both fresh and saltwater fish and other forms of marine life and this is a must-see attraction.