

All for NATURE

Labuan's Kina Benuwa forest reserve set to be an eco-tourism hub.

LABUAN'S newly-declared Kina Benuwa Permanent Forest Reserve is set to become a focal point for eco-tourism and stimulate the local economy.

Natural Resources and Environmental Sustainability Minister Nik Nazmi Nik Ahmad said the transformation will also preserve the invaluable mangrove forest on the island, potentially enhancing the existing fisheries sector around the wetlands.

"The transformation of Kina Benuwa Permanent Forest Reserve into Labuan's eco-tourism hub is our ministry's effort of generating revenue for the local economy, in line with the Prime Minister's aspiration of wanting to accord Labuan special attention.

"We have successfully gazetted more than 60ha of Kina Benuwa mangrove forest as a permanent forest reserve (on July 11) last year.

"The intact nature of the mangrove forest provides a solid foundation for its transformation into an eco-tourism and conservation area, which will undoubtedly contribute to the

local economy," he said at a press conference in Labuan recently.

Nik Nazmi added that plans are underway to establish an office on the island to administer and promote the Kina Benuwa Forest Reserve.

"The move is seen as a strategic step to manage the newly designated eco-tourism site efficiently," he said, adding that the total permanent forest reserves in the Federal Territories have now expanded to 152.901ha, up from the previous 84.62ha.

He also expressed the ministry's commitment to building a strategic partnership with Labuan Corporation for the effective management of the forest reserve.

Nik Nazmi said on July 26 last year that the gazette-ment was in line with the government's commitment towards mangrove forest preservation and conservation in accordance with the National Coastal Zone Physical Plan II and was the first permanent forest reserve under the National Forestry Act 1984 (Act 313) in Labuan as well as the



Last year, more than 60ha of the Kina Benuwa mangrove forest in Labuan was gazetted as a permanent forest. — Bernama

first mangrove forest reserve in the Federal Territories.

Poetic welcome

Meanwhile, the Melaka government has constructed the 13 Poetry Gateways (Gerbang Pantun) to welcome tourists and visitors in conjunction with Visit Melaka Year 2024 (VMY 2024).

Melaka Chief Minister Datuk Seri Ab Rauf Yusoh said the 13 locations in three local authorities in the state involved Hang Tuah Jaya Municipal Council (MPHTJ), Alor Gajah Municipal Council (MPAG) and Jasin Municipal Council (MPJ).

"At MPHTJ, the gateway is

located at the junction of Padang Keladi-Ayer Keroh while in MPAG, it is at the Simpang Ampat roundabout, Kuala Linggi bridge, Lubok China roundabout, Tebong junction, Kendong junction, the junction of Kuala Ina and Pulau Sebang.

"In MPJ, they are located at Bandar Jasin Bistari, Jasin toll, Umbai town, Alor Gajah-Melaka Tengah-Jasin Highway (AMJ) at Sungai Rambai, Asahan and Simpang Bekoh," he said at a recent Melaka State Legislative Assembly sitting.

He was replying to a question by Leng Chau Yen (PH-Banda Hilir) who wanted to know the places that have the gateways

in Melaka.

Answering a supplementary question posed by Leng regarding the production of a book of poetries for the future generations, Ab Rauf said the Tun Perak Institute (ITP) was in the final stages of publishing the book.

He said the state government has also created a Melaka Poetry Gateway website that stores a collection of poetries produced in the state through competitions held at village, school and government department levels.

He added that the production of poetries also received favourable response from the non-Malay community in the competitions held. — Bernama