



KERATAN AKHBAR

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Jerai Geopark proclaimed national geopark

YAN — Jerai Geopark was yesterday proclaimed a National Geopark in conjunction with the coronation of the 29th Sultan of Kedah Al Aminul Karim Sultan Sallehuddin Sultan Badlishah on Oct 22.

The proclamation was made by Sultan Sallehuddin at the foot of Mount Jerai, Guar Chempedak near here. Present at the event was the Sultanah of Kedah Sultanah Maliha Tengku Ariff.

Others present were Kedah Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Mukhriz Mahathir and State Industrial and Investment Committee and Local Government and Housing Committee chairman Tan Kok Yew, who is also Jerai Geopark Proclamation Ceremony working committee chairman.

Water, Land and Natural Resources

Minister Dr Xavier Jayakumar said Jerai was certified as a National Geopark after 18 months of work starting with a geopark development survey in 2016 led by the Geoscience Department of Kedah, Perlis and Penang.

“The ministry welcomes the efforts in the creation of a geopark in our country that is of particular importance to sustainable development,” he said.

“This is in line with the vision of the ministry as the ‘Leader of Sustainable Management of Water, Land and Natural Resources For Prosperity of the Nation.’” He said the government had allocated RM10.7 million in the 11th Malaysia Plan for Geopark Development Potential Assessment Projects for the preservation and conservation of natural resources.

“From that amount, RM685,000 has

been channelled to the Kedah, Perlis and Penang Geoscience Department for the implementation of complete and detailed study and research on geological aspects,” he said.

Dr Xavier said geopark was a term used to describe the concept of sustainable development that stressed on the conservation of natural heritage resources while upholding history and culture as well as boosting local economic activities.

He said the Jerai Geopark, covering an area of 800 sq km, encompassing two districts, namely Yan and Kuala Muda, was chosen for geopark development because it is scientifically located in the high rock geodiversity area of the Jerai Formation, Mahang Formation and Jerai Granite.

“The Jerai Formation with a rock

age of about 550 million years is at the highest level of 1,217 metres from the sea level making Gunung Jerai unique with a high geological heritage value. The outcropping of the Jerai granite has shaped the landscape of Jerai which impresses visitors passing the area.

“Jerai has been a trade route guide since the golden age of the Old Kedah civilisation. This geological and archaeological evidence shows the progress of the iron-based industry in Jerai which became the focus of trade and the world’s supply of iron at that time.”

The biological diversity, namely the richness of flora and fauna at different altitudes also adds to Jerai’s potential as the geopark as a global geopark of the future, he said. — Bernama