



Unit Komunikasi Korporat

KERATAN AKHBAR

SURAT KHABAR :	STARMETRO	MUKA SURAT :	2
TARIKH :	20/5/2021		
JABATAN :	PERHILITAN		
KLASIFIKASI :	PERHATIAN		

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JOHOR

Tracking wild jumbos on the move

Use of satellite collars and drones help Perhilitan monitor these animals' whereabouts in the state

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THE Johor Elephant Sanctuary (JES) has an important role to play in helping to reduce the number of clashes between humans and elephants in the state. JES, the second elephant sanctuary in Malaysia, doubles up as a tourist attraction for animal lovers to get close to the jumbos.

More importantly, it serves as a training ground to train wild elephants to stay away from areas inhabited by humans.

Johor Wildlife and National Parks Department (Perhilitan) director Salman Saaban said the Perhilitan sanctuary in Kota Tinggi, built at a cost of RM15mil, had

been operational since December last year.

"We currently have 13 trained Perhilitan staff, who look after three elephants in the sanctuary," he told *StarMetro*, adding that the team received their training at Kuala Gandah National Elephant Conservation Centre in Lanchang, Pahang.

The latest 72.9ha sanctuary, located along Jalan Lombong near the famous Kota Tinggi Waterfall in Johor, was conceptualised to provide refuge for about 15 elephants at a time.

"We have identified several phases under JES and our main priority is to educate the public, in particular those living in villages near the sanctuary, as well as

focusing on training elephants," said Salman.

"From the feedback received, villagers and plantation owners welcome the setting up of a sanctuary here as its function is to help protect both animal and humans."

He stressed that Perhilitan's efforts to engage with more villagers and plantation owners within the eastern and central parts of Johor, however, hit a snag following the movement control order.

"There are about 120 to 160 wild elephants roaming the thick forested areas in the state, especially in Segamat, Kluang, Mersing and Kota Tinggi.

"Elephants, the biggest land mammals on Earth, usually move in herds from one location to



An elephant herd spotted near Jemaluang in Mersing, Johor. Perhilitan has been proactive in monitoring the animals to prevent conflicts with humans.



another to find food.

"It is better for humans to stay away from them and not provoke them," he said, adding that most of the wild elephants at the sanctuary were young jumbos left behind the herd and that had wandered into populated areas.

Salman said the elephants will be released back into the forest once they were trained and tamed.

He said the department installed eight satellite collars as part of an early warning system to monitor the movement of elephant herds as a move to prevent future conflicts with humans.

He disclosed that Perhilitan planned to add four more satellite collars this year, besides having three drone units available at Jemaluang and Kluang.

Each herd often has at least one collared elephant among them while the drones are despatched when Perhilitan receives a complaint that an animal is about to encroach into a residential area.

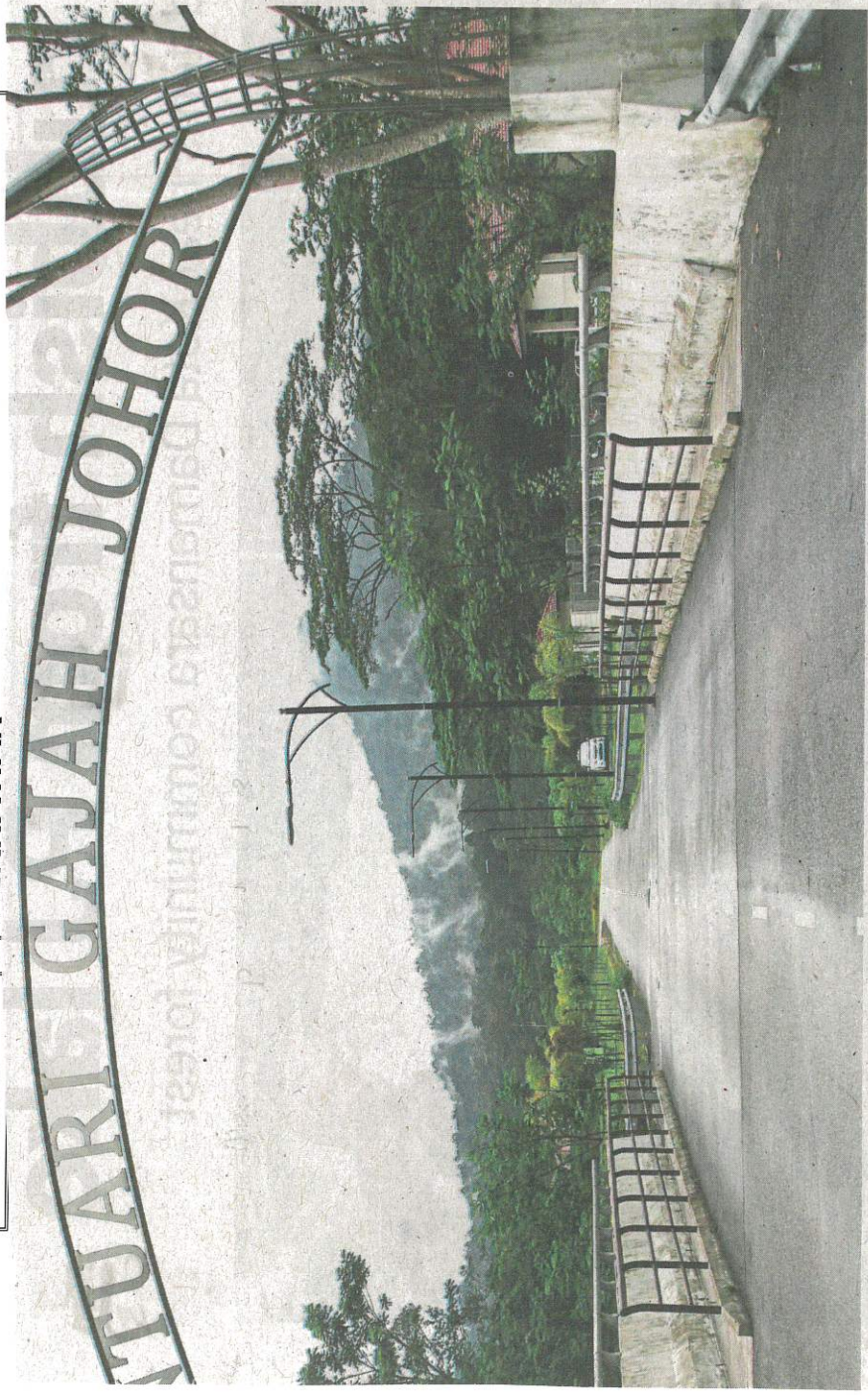
Salman said Perhilitan would send a team to the ground to locate the elephants away from the area upon receiving drone visuals.



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Star Metro 21
M 13

Perhilitan expects to see a drop in elephant-human conflict now that the Johor Elephant Sanctuary is open — THOMAS YONG
The Star

He highlighted that recently, two young female elephants died in Kluang after accidentally consuming poison when they strayed into a plantation in search of food.

He added that last month, two female elephants were caught at an army camp in Mersing.

In total, Salman said Perhilitan had received about 514 complaints on elephants in the last five years.

He said following the complaints, the department had been proactively carrying out measures to prevent human-elephant conflict.

“Between 2016 and 2020,

Perhilitan carried out 1,609 monitoring and control actions by relocating 30 wild elephants to a safer location far away from humans.

“Most of the elephants were relocated to Endau-Rompin National Park as that is their natural habitat, while some were sent to the Kuala Gandah conservation centre for treatment and training,” he said.

He added that during the same period, Perhilitan also recorded nine elephant attacks on people, resulting in six deaths and three injured in Kota Tinggi, Mersing and Kluang.

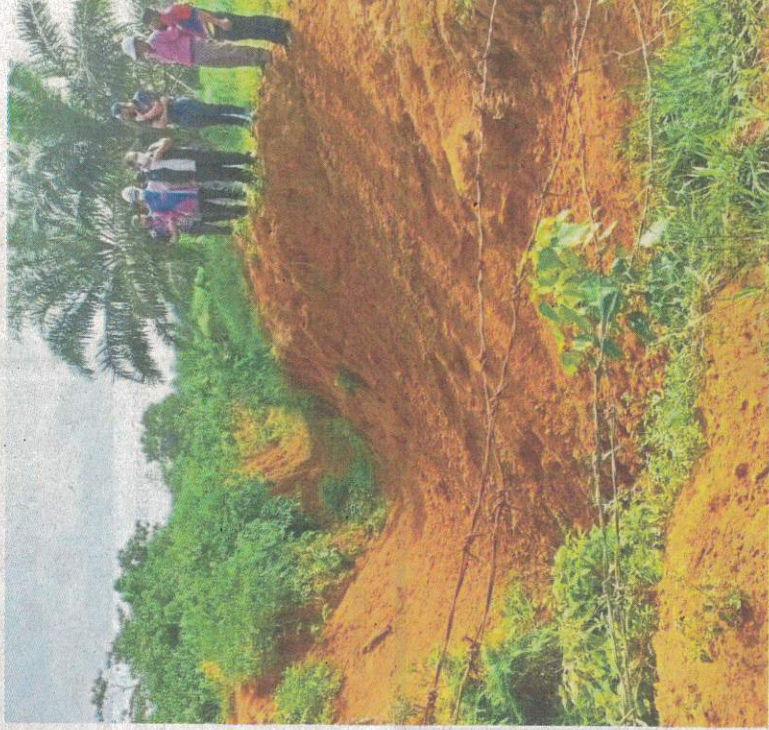
“With our continued efforts to protect the elephants and by hav-



Salman says villagers and plantation owners are happy that JES has opened its doors.

ing JES operational, the department is aiming for a 50% reduction in human-elephant conflict within the next five years in Johor,” said Salman.

He added that at present, JES was still off limits to the public but there were plans to launch its eco-tourism package by the end of the year.



Trenches built around the Felda Lok Heng Timur plantation in Kota Tinggi, Johor did not stop elephants from entering the area in search of food.