BIJI ALAM

Quarterly newsletter May 2026

MEET OUR JUDGES 2026

We are delighted that the following conservationists have agreed to be the external judges for the Biji Alam Outstanding Conservationist Award competition 2026. They are **Dr. Hj. Rahimatsah Amat**, CEO of the Sabah Environmental Trust; **Dr. Sharifah Nora**, a senior marine scientist and independent consultant based in Penang, with expertise in international environmental law and ocean governance and **Dr. Sivananthan T. Elagupillay**, a prominent Malaysian wildlife biologist and conservation expert specialising in big cats. We are very grateful and honoured to have these experts on our judging panel.

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AWARD 2026 - WHO'S GOING TO WIN ?

Our judges will have their work cut out this year, in choosing the winners for **our 2 prizes of RM40,000**. A peek at the applications, now that the 2026 competition has closed, shows a marked uptick in the number of entries and a good breadth of projects, ranging from on-the- ground conservation work in many states to the more unusual fields of promoting advocacy and technologies for conservation. The span of flora and fauna species and the habitats they aim to protect - from forests to streams, wetlands, reefs and other coastal marine ecosystems - reassures us that we are lucky to have conservationists out there who are looking after the many facets of our natural heritage. But more about them will be revealed when we announce the final winners on 3 November; stay tuned!

AUDIT DONE AND DUSTED

We have now issued our first set of **externally audited accounts** which were approved at our recent AGM. If as a donor, you have any questions about them, please feel free to drop us a line and we will be more than happy to answer your questions. See our website under 'More'.

NEW - CAPACITY TRAINING

In February, we introduced a new strand of support for our conservationists - a communications workshop for 14 people held by trainer Wong Siew Lyn of Macaranga .

WINNERS' HIGHLIGHTS

Big step to protection

Congratulations to **Dr Nur Munira of SPMP** who on receiving our award last October immediately used it to produce a seminal Shorebirds Carnival a few weeks later, officiated by the Mayor of Seberang Perai. Shortly afterwards, the Penang Forestry Department agreed to put forward the site for international recognition as part of the East Asian-Australian Flyway route; If this is achieved, it will be a culmination of SPPM's work over many years of collecting data, garnering community

Buffer zone achieved

Well done to the **Friends of Bukit Kiara** our 2025 grantee for getting the DBKL to designate a landmark 300m no-development buffer zone at a periphery of their space and a neighbouring developmental project in May this year. This is legally significant as it's the first time that protection of bio-diversity has been used as a reason to set up a buffer zone and it means that the host of wildlife living within the park will be significantly less affected. Urban parks have to fight for every inch of their green lungs and this

support and lobbying the stakeholders, and a first step towards their ultimate goal of achieving formal protection for the site in Malaysia.This celebration of migratory shorebirds over two days, the first of its kind in SEA, drew in a big crowd of over 300 people from the community, media and local authorities, all curious to see and learn about the extraordinary display of birds that descend on our doorstep in Seberang Perai twice a year in the awe-inspiring phenomenon of global migration.

decision sets a valuable precedent for others to receive similar protection. We are proud to have played a part in this, however small. To remind, Bukit Kiara's grant was used to commission a biodiversity survey for that crucial part of their reserve that has now been protected and it unveiled a wonderful range of biodiversity from fireflies to otters, hornbills, pangolins and more. You can go to their website to discover what's inside their park.

Canopy bridge no 3 goes up

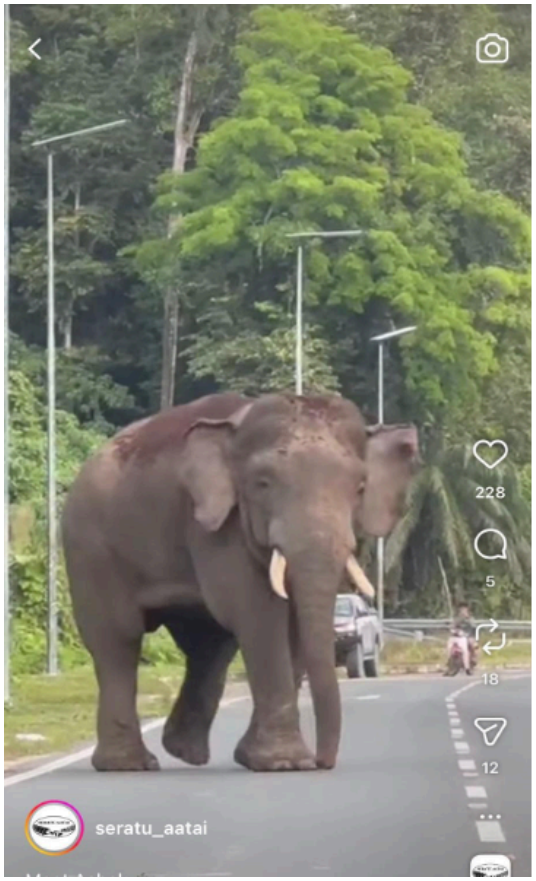
Congratulations to **Dr. Jo Leen Yap of** Langur Project Penang Hub who has just installed her third canopy bridge in Penang, on 8 April, a feat achieved after many years of persistent planning and negotiation.

The launch and press conference was attended by Penang's state exco assembly man for Infrastructure and Transport, YB Zairil Khir Johari and the bridge since visited by Malaysia's deputy minister of Natural Resources and Environment. YB Timbalan Menteri Syed Ibrahim Syed Noh was even prompted by the visit to say that he would now study the wider uses of canopy bridges - great result Jo Leen! The endorsement of this bridge, that allows safe crossing of animals over a busy road, by high level politicians is a significant indicator that Jo Leen and her team's wider ambition of getting the considerations of wildlife embedded into infrastructure planning is one step closer to being achieved. As well as her work on connecting habitats for wildlife, she has continued to roll out her workshops with Penang residents on how to better coexist with monkeys. At a time when human-wildlife conflict has become an ever more significant issue for conservation, we were very happy when Jo Leen told us that our award "was instrumental in strengthening this on-the-ground work, fostering a more harmonious relationship between Penang's residents and primates."

Read an article about her.

Hi Achok!

We leave you with an image of Achok, the Bornean elephant who has taken to hanging out with the villagers in Sukau and promoting his own style of peaceful coexistence!
Photo and story courtesy of Seratu Aatai, 2025 winner



For the next few months, we too will be rather busy reading through the entries for this year and feeling yet again humbled by the sheer dedication and passion of our Malaysian conservationists. We'll be in touch soon after.

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With warm regards,
Natalie, Teckwyn and the Biji Alam Team.

Nature photos courtesy of Zaharil and A.Aldrie Amir respectively

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