Star Special

THE STAR, FRIDAY 25 JULY 2025

SULTAN OF PAHANG'S BIRTHDAY

Majestic milestone

His Royal Highness, The Sultan of Pahang, Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah Ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Ahmad Shah celebrates his birthday today.

Legacy of warmth and humility

"I MAY no longer be the King of Malaysia but if allowed, my wish is to be the King in your hearts."

Those were the heartfelt words of His Royal Highness, The Sultan of Pahang, Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah Ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Ahmad Shah, spoken a day before his tenure as the 16th Yang di-Pertuan Agong came to an end, having served from 2019 to 2024.

It was a sincere wish from a Ruler who wanted to remain close to his subjects.

A gentle soul who exudes warmth and humility, Al-Sultan Abdullah's unassuming nature is one reason people of all ages feel comfortable approaching him.

Throughout Tuanku's many walkabouts and visits across the state, it's common to see people chatting with him, shaking or kissing his hand, hugging him or even taking selfies. Tuanku remains unfazed by his title and royal status, favouring genuine connection over protocol.

Tuanku's kindness and empathy shine through his actions – frequently putting royal formalities aside to help those in need, whether stopping to aid accident victims or personally visiting communities affected by disasters.

Another notable gesture was Tuanku's historic journey with the royal family to the interior regions of Sabah and Sarawak during his tenure as the Yang di-Pertuan Agong – the first such visit by a Malaysian head of state.

The Kembara Kenali Borneo tour was designed to be informal and people-oriented, reflecting Al-Sultan Abdullah's wish to engage closely and personally with the rakyat. It was widely regarded as a success.

Inspired by that experience, a similar initiative was carried out in Pahang this year called Kembara Pahang 1.0. The royal entourage, led by Al-Sultan Abdullah, travelled 428km across four districts – Maran, Temerloh, Bera and Pekan – from April 21 to 23.

His Royal Highness was accompanied by his consort Her Royal Highness, The Tengku Ampuan of Pahang, Tunku Azizah Aminah Maimunah Iskandariah binti Al-Marhum Sultan Iskandar Al-Haj, whom he married in 1986. The couple has nine children, four sons and five daughters, as well as three grandchildren.

Al-Sultan Abdullah expressed joy over the journey, highlighting the chance to connect with locals and appreciate the state's natural beauty and rustic charm.

"We were greeted so warmly by the people, including the elderly, youth and students. I made it a point to stop and thank them for waiting for us.

"We had the chance to meet the people and visit their villages. Moving forward, we will explore ways to develop these areas, including infrastructure, while preserving Pahang's natural greenery," Al-Sultan Abdullah said at the closing ceremony that marked the end of the journey.

Al-Sultan Abdullah's enthusiasm was warmly reciprocated by the people throughout the tour. Banners were hung across districts, wishing the royal family well and praying for their health and safety.

Throughout the expedition, various community-oriented activities were held, including aid distribution to the asnaf (zakat recipients), communal feasts and traditional games. These events allowed the royal couple to interact closely with local communities.

Photos from the tour showed Al-Sultan Abdullah and Tunku Azizah enjoying a motorcycle ride, engaging comfortably with villagers and blending effortlessly into the everyday life of the people.

His Royal Highness also expressed a desire to visit areas not covered during the trip in order to meet more of his people and gain a better understanding of their challenges on the ground.

Al-Sultan Abdullah also encouraged the rakyat to continue contributing to the development of the state and nation economically, socially and in the spirit of unity within Malaysia's multiracial society.

"Be grateful, and continue to be grateful," His Royal Highness said.

Al-Sultan Abdullah, who is also head of Islam in Pahang, oversees matters related to the welfare and development of Muslims in the state.

To further strengthen the Islamic legal system, His Royal Highness proposed the establishment of a Syariah Supreme Court as the apex religious court in Pahang.

Tuanku also envisions Universiti Islam Pahang Sultan Ahmad Shah becoming one of the country's top Islamic universities, along with the development of an Arabic language centre at the institution.

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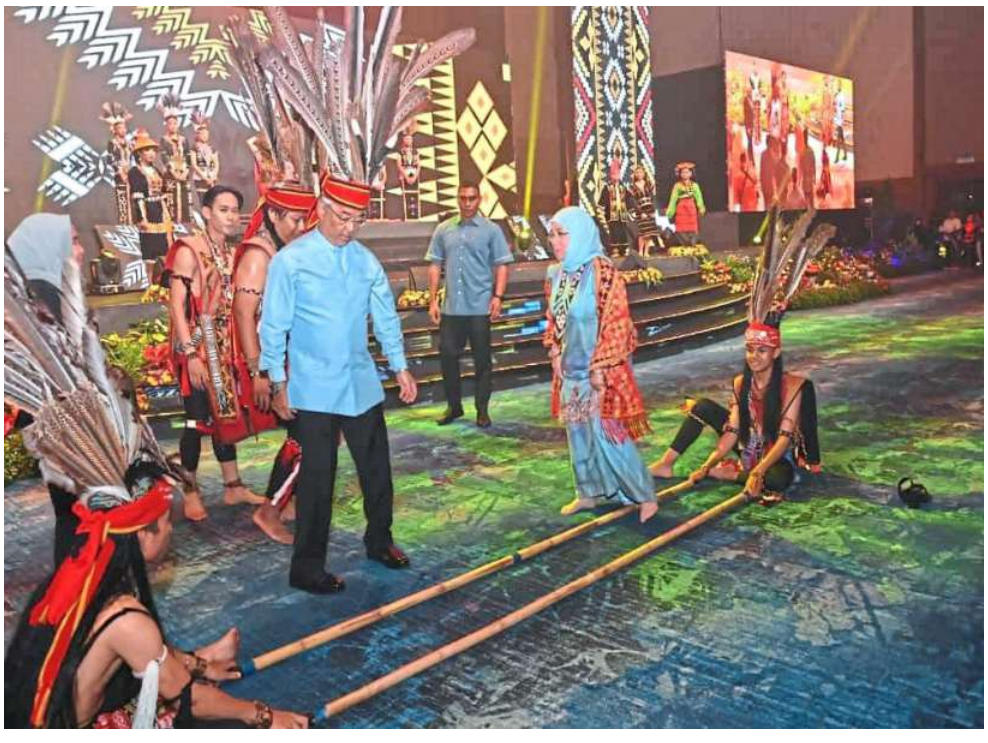
Al-Sultan Abdullah and Tunku Azizah going full retro with cartoon props and kampung vibes during the People's Feast in Kampung Simpang Pelangai, Bentong, in May. During the event, His Royal Highness also presented contributions to 100 zakat recipients. — Photo from Kesultanan Pahang Facebook

Al-Sultan Abdullah sharing a light-hearted moment with the rakyat during his visit to Cameron Highlands in February. — Photo from Kesultanan Pahang Facebook



Al-Sultan Abdullah and Tunku Azizah trying out a traditional bamboo dance at the Sabah International Convention Centre during the Kembara Kenali Borneo tour in September 2023. — Photo from Istana Pahang Facebook

DAULAT TUANKU

MERAFAK SEMBAH DAN SETINGGI-TINGGI TAHNIAH

KEBAWAH DULI PADUKA BAGINDA SULTAN PAHANG
AL-SULTAN ABDULLAH RI'AYATUDDIN AL-MUSTAFA BILLAH SHAH
IBNI AL-MARHUM SULTAN HAJI AHMAD SHAH

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SULTAN DAN RAJA PEMERINTAH BAGI NEGERI PAHANG DARUL MAKMUR
SERTA SEGALA JAJAHAN TAKLUKNYA

SEMPENA
MEMULIAKAN SAMBUTAN ULANG TAHUN HARI KEPUTERAAN YANG KE-66
KEBAWAH DULI PADUKA BAGINDA SULTAN PAHANG

PADA 25 JULAI 2025 (JUMAAT)
BERSAMAAN 29 MUHARAM 1447 HIJRAH

SEMBAH TAKZIM DARIPADA:

Tan Sri Dato' Sri Mohamad Fuzi Bin Harun (Independent Non-Executive Chairman),
Tan Sri Dato' Tan Chee Sing (Group Executive Vice Chairman),
Board of Directors, Management and Staff Members of

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(Incorporated in Malaysia)

Al-Sultan Abdullah at a Quranic Recitation Class and Jawi Script Workshop at Istana Abdulaziz in June (above); and with locals during the Kembara Pahang 1.0 tour in April (left), which reflected his wish for informal, personal engagement with the rakyat. — Photos from Kesultanan Pahang Facebook

Al-Sultan Abdullah greeting Giggs at a high-tea event in Kuala Lumpur celebrating Malaysia's sporting legacy in May. Giggs presented the Ruler with a signed club jersey. — Photo from Kesultanan Pahang Facebook

Royal advocate for sports

> FROM PAGE 2

Additionally, Al-Sultan Abdullah called on the Malay Customs Council (Muip) to establish a hub for the education and preservation of the Jawi script as part of efforts to safeguard traditional Malay-Islamic heritage.

A passionate sportsman, Al-Sultan Abdullah has played various sports, including football and polo. Notably, His Royal Highness won a gold medal in polo at the 12th SEA Games in Singapore in 1983.

The Ruler's sports administration career is equally impressive, having held key positions such as president of the Football Association of Malaysia, president of the Malaysian Hockey Confederation, vice-president of the Asian Football Confederation and executive committee member of FIFA.

The Ruler was also awarded the AFC Diamond of Asia – the highest honour in Asian football – for his contributions to the sport.

In May this year, Tuanku attended a high-tea event in Kuala Lumpur with 160 former national athletes, celebrating Malaysia's sporting legacy.

During the event, Manchester United legend Ryan Giggs made a surprise appearance and presented the Ruler with a signed club jersey.

One of the guests, Datuk Zainal Abidin Hassan, a former Pahang and national footballer, shared fond memories of how Al-Sultan Abdullah would attend training sessions every afternoon.

"We had to be on our toes, not out of fear but because we knew we were dealing with someone who truly understood football," Zainal recalled.

Born on July 30, 1959, at Istana Mangga Tunggal, Pekan, Al-Sultan Abdullah received his early education at SK Ahmad, SK St Thomas Kuantan and SMK St Thomas Kuantan, before continuing his studies abroad.

In the United Kingdom, His Royal Highness attended the Aldenham School, Davies College and the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst.

Al-Sultan Abdullah also took a course in International Relations and Diplomacy at Worcester and Queen Elizabeth College in 1981.

When Al-Sultan Abdullah's late father Almarhum Sultan Ahmad Shah was appointed the seventh Yang di-Pertuan Agong, Al-Sultan Abdullah became the Regent of Pahang at just 20 years old, an early entry into governance that paved the way for his leadership as state Ruler and eventually as Malaysia's 16th King.

Step into Pahang's living history

PEKAN, the quaint royal town of Pahang, has recently drawn attention for its growing focus on history, culture and the arts.

At the heart of the town stand two regal and striking landmarks: the Sultan Abu Bakar Museum (formerly Istana Beram) and the Sultan Abdullah Mosque Museum, both of which have undergone extensive restoration and reimagination.

The rejuvenated museums have drawn steady public interest. This is good news for Pahang State Museum Corporation director Datuk Ahmad Farid Abdul Jalal, whose goal is to create a space where people can meaningfully explore the past, present and future.

"These museums have undergone a transformation that highlights their historical and traditional architectural beauty while offering enriching opportunities for public learning," he said.

They are part of a broader initiative called the Pahang Museum Campus, an ambitious cultural project that will include the Maritime Museum, the Al-Sultan Abdullah History and Civilisation Research Centre, and the Tunku Azizah Royal Craft Village.

Two palaces – Istana Mangga Tunggal and Istana Leban Tunggal – are also included in the master plan.

Her Royal Highness, The Tengku Ampuan of Pahang, Tunku Azizah Aminah Maimunah Iskandariah binti Al-Marhum Sultan Iskandar Al-Haj and the Crown Prince of Pahang, Tengku Hassanal Ibrahim Alam Shah Ibni Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah (ninth and eighth from right) pictured with members of the Pahang royalty and dignitaries during last year's IFF in Pekan. — Photo from Kesultanan Pahang Facebook

Ahmad Farid said the idea for the campus was inspired by his overseas visits, particularly a trip to the Museum Campus in Chicago, the United States.

"With this plan already in motion, Pekan will become the first town in the country to have a dedicated Museum Campus.

"It's an educational centre, but with a more informal and relaxed setting, offering a fun and less stressful way of learning.

"The public can walk freely, discover the past and hopefully gain insights that can help shape a better future. We want to inspire people to learn, play and connect," he said.

The upcoming campus will feature green spaces, natural shaded areas, cafes and public amenities to encourage community interaction. Given the spread of the buildings across Pekan, free shuttle services are planned to improve accessibility.

The campus also aims to be a resource centre, with museum staff already collecting research papers and materials from universities related to the history and cultural heritage of Pahang.

Ahmad Farid added that the project has received support from the state government, federal government and Pahang Royal Household.

The Museum Campus is scheduled for launch in 2026, which will also mark the 50th anniversary of the Pahang State Museum.

Another cultural milestone that recently placed Pekan in the limelight was the Islamic Fashion Festival (IFF).

Held in August last year, the event featured over 100 costumes by seven designers from Malaysia and Indonesia, set against the rustic charm and historical architecture of the royal town.

The runway, which was set among heritage buildings, highlighted Muslim women's fashion and headgear from around the world.

IFF founder Datuk Seri Raja Rezza Shah Raja Aman Shah said that while the event is often held in five- or six-star hotels, historical venues have always had a special appeal.

"These locations are unassuming but rich in history and tradition. I'm especially impressed with the museums. They're tastefully restored and beautifully presented. These are important elements worthy of international attention," he noted.

The Pahang State Museum co-organised the IFF and Ahmad Farid believed Pekan was an ideal location for the event.

He noted that Pekan is a living museum, a town deeply rooted in Malay and Islamic identity, making it especially meaningful to celebrate that heritage through modern platforms like the IFF.

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Lembaga Pengarah, Pengurusan & Kakitangan

AZRB
AHMAD ZAKI RESOURCES BERHAD
Registration No. 199701017271 (432768-X)

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SULTAN AND RULER OF THE STATE OF PAHANG DARUL MAKMUR
AND ALL ITS DEPENDENCIES

ON THE OCCASION OF THE 66th BIRTHDAY
HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE SULTAN OF PAHANG

ON 25th JULY 2025 (FRIDAY)
29th MUHARAM 1447 HIJRAH

WITH UTMOST SINCERITY FROM:

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WITH UTMOST SINCERITY FROM:

NEGERI PAHANG

YAB Dato' Sri Diraja Haji Wan Rosdy Bin Wan Ismail
Menteri Besar Pahang

Pahang State Government and
People of Pahang Darul Makmur State

Green economy drives state strategy

Backed by China's Belt and Road Initiative, MCKIP has attracted over RM30bil in investments since its launch, driving the steel, petrochemical and advanced materials industries.

PAHANG, the largest state in Peninsular Malaysia, has long been known for its rich natural resources and flourishing tourism industry.

Yet beyond its lush rainforests and serene coastal towns, the state is steadily advancing as an industrial force on the East Coast, quietly redefining its economic future.

In recent years, Pahang has emerged as a rising industrial hub, attracting both domestic and foreign investment into a growing portfolio of sectors ranging from heavy industry to green technology.

One of the cornerstones of this transformation is the Malaysia-China Kuantan Industrial Park (MCKIP), which has attracted over RM30bil in cumulative investments since its launch.

Backed by China's Belt and Road Initiative, MCKIP has become a model of bilateral industrial collaboration, focusing on sectors such as steel production, petrochemicals and advanced materials.

According to the Malaysian Investment Development Authority, the park remains a strategic platform for high-value industrial growth in the East Coast Economic Region.

A notable milestone was the RM7.7bil expansion of Alliance Steel (M) Sdn Bhd at MCKIP, reinforcing the region's role as a key manufacturing centre for hard-to-abate industries.

This influx of capital and technical expertise has spurred infrastructure upgrades, auxiliary services and employment opportunities throughout the region.

A key driver supporting this momentum is Kuantan Port, a deepwater facility with a cargo-handling capacity of up to 52 million tonnes annually. The port's enhanced capacity positions it as a vital logistics hub for regional trade.

The ongoing construction of the East Coast Rail Link (ECRL), slated for completion by the end of 2026, is expected to further amplify this connectivity.

Once operational, the ECRL will link Kuantan to the Klang Valley and the northern states, reducing transport times and opening new corridors for trade and industrial supply chains.

Transport Minister Anthony Loke has highlighted the ECRL's role in strengthening national logistics infrastructure and aligning Malaysia's development with regional trade flows.

Conserving forests and biodiversity will serve as the foundation of the green economy, says Wan Rosdy.

"It will certainly complement international trade by boosting export-oriented industries and making Malaysia more attractive to businesses," he said at the breakthrough ceremony of the 16.39km Genting Tunnel earlier this month.

"The ECRL is also touted as a game changer for the movement of passengers and freight in Peninsular Malaysia.

"It will link state capitals, key urban centres, industrial hubs, seaports, airports and tourism zones while integrating with existing railway lines along its corridor," he added.

At the same time, long-established industrial zones such as the Pekan Automotive Park remain key contributors to the state's economy.

Home to anchor players and renowned international marques, the park continues to support automotive assembly and component manufacturing.

Looking ahead, Pahang is also laying the groundwork for a shift toward cleaner industries.

The Crown Prince of Pahang, Tengku Hassanal Ibrahim Alam Shah Ibni Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah, has consistently called on the state government to embrace the potential of alternative revenue streams over traditional ones such as logging and mining.

Loke says the ECRL will be a game changer for the movement of passengers and freight in Peninsular Malaysia. — MUHAMAD SHAHRIL ROSLI/The Star

While acknowledging that the state cannot completely cease these activities, Tengku Hassanal has emphasised the importance of adopting sustainable practices in these sectors.

To that end, the state government has drawn up the Pahang Economic Transformation Master Plan 2025-2030 as a strategic measure to reshape the state's economic landscape.

"It is projected to increase the state's revenue to RM2bil within the next five to 10 years," said Pahang Mentri Besar Datuk Seri Wan Rosdy Wan Ismail recently.

The plan will focus on strengthening the agro-food and plantation industries, advancing materials development, promoting nature-based tourism, enhancing human capital and workforce quality, and driving regional transformation and district empowerment.

"Conserving forests and biodiversity will serve as the foundation of the green economy. The green economy is a strategic asset, not only from the perspective of ecological sustainability but also as a new engine of growth, including carbon investment and the climate economy," said Wan Rosdy.

With international partnerships, ambitious infrastructure projects and a focus on environmental responsibility, Pahang is gradually reshaping its industrial identity.

Its leaders are not merely seeking investment – they are laying the foundation for a diversified, resilient and future-ready economy.

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WITH UTMOST SINCERITY FROM:

DATO' FRANKY CHUA GOON ENG, DIMP
The Board of Directors, Management & Staff

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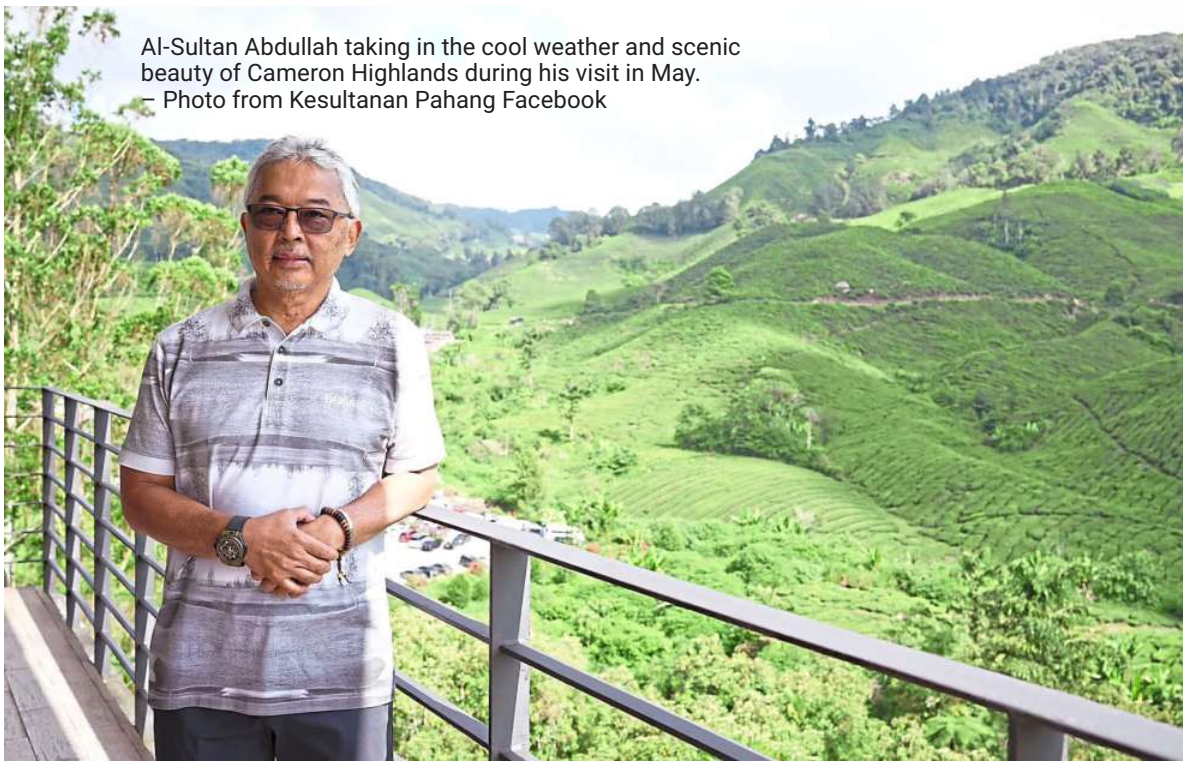

Al-Sultan Abdullah taking in the cool weather and scenic beauty of Cameron Highlands during his visit in May. – Photo from Kesultanan Pahang Facebook

Visitors posing for a photo at the iconic clock tower in Fraser's Hill.

Pahang shines with nature's splendour

AS Pahang celebrates the birthday of His Royal Highness, The Sultan of Pahang, Al-Sultan Abdullah Ri'ayatuddin Al-Mustafa Billah Shah Ibni Al-Marhum Sultan Haji Ahmad Shah, it is a time not only to honour the state's beloved monarch but also to reflect on the splendour of the land the Ruler calls home.

From its age-old rainforests and misty highlands to its sun-kissed beaches and living traditions, Pahang stands as a symbol of Malaysia's natural and cultural wealth. It is a place where nature thrives, heritage endures and the spirit of its people remains ever warm and welcoming.

With over half its land covered in forest, Pahang is a haven for biodiversity and a paradise for nature lovers. The state is home to Taman Negara, one of the world's oldest tropical rainforests, offering dense jungle treks, canopy walks and river safaris that immerse visitors in ancient ecosystems.

Further south, Taman Negara Endau-Rompin provides equally rich experiences among rugged terrains and cascading waterfalls.

In the heart of Pahang lies Tasik Chini, Malaysia's second-largest freshwater lake and a Unesco Biosphere Reserve. The lake's legends and lotus-covered waters are matched by the cultural depth of its Orang Asli communities.

Recognising the importance of these natural treasures, the state has prioritised them in its recent development plans

In October last year, Pahang Mentri Besar Datuk Seri Wan Rosdy Wan Ismail affirmed that projects include improving facilities at Taman Negara Endau-Rompin and nominating the Sungai Lembing tin mining site for Unesco World Heritage status, through significant allocations under Budget 2025.

Pahang's highlands offer cool air, panoramic views and a peaceful escape from the lowlands. In Cameron Highlands, visitors are drawn to emerald tea plantations, strawberry farms, and mossy forests rich in biodiversity. It is a place where nature, agriculture and nostalgia converge.

One of the world's oldest rainforests, Taman Negara offers jungle treks, canopy walks and river safaris through ancient ecosystems.

Meanwhile, Genting Highlands offers a different kind of energy. As the state's entertainment capital, it boasts theme parks, high-end retail and international performances. The contrast between these two destinations reflects Pahang's ability to cater to diverse tourism interests.

Another gem gaining attention is Fraser's Hill, a birder's paradise. During a recent state assembly debate, appointed assemblyman Rizal Jamin proposed that the Pahang government intensify efforts to capitalise on avitourism or birdwatching.

"A total of 42 species, including rare birds such as the great slaty woodpecker and the black hornbill, were spotted.

"The fee for an avitourism guide ranges from RM500 to RM550 per day, providing a lucrative income for those in rural areas," Rizal said in describing a birdwatching activity he participated in recently.

The growing popularity of birdwatching adds another feather to Pahang's ecotourism cap. Spanning over 200km, the state's coastline is a patchwork of tranquil beaches, fishing villages and marine sanctuaries.

Cherating is especially notable not only for its surf and laid-back vibe, but also as the home of the Cherating Turtle Conservation and Information Centre, which plays a key role in safeguarding green turtle nesting grounds.

With support from the East Coast Economic Region Development Council (ECERDC), the centre recently underwent significant upgrades, which were completed in April. These improvements signal a broader commitment to marine conservation, sustainable tourism and environmental education.

Just down the coast, Teluk Cempedak draws families and holidaymakers with its vibrant beachfront, while islands like Pulau Tioman continue to offer world-class diving and snorkelling experiences.

Pahang's cultural heritage is as rich as its natural one. In Pekan, the royal town, visitors can explore the Sultan Abu Bakar Museum, which traces the lineage and legacies of Pahang's sultans. Nearby, artisans at the Institut Kemahiran Tenun Pahang Diraja continue to preserve age-old textile traditions.

Efforts to preserve such heritage have been bolstered by infrastructure upgrades. In December last year, ECERDC completed restoration works in Bandar Pekan Lama, rejuvenating historic streetscapes and encouraging tourism tied to royal and traditional history.

Pahang has taken decisive steps to ensure its tourism growth remains sustainable and inclusive. In recent years, eco-lodges, community-run homestays, and nature-based programmes have multiplied, reflecting the state's alignment with the government's Madani Vision.

One standout initiative is the state's collection of sustainability fees through hotel stays – money channelled directly into tourism-related improvements.

State unity, tourism, and culture committee chairman Leong Yu Man announced that almost RM5mil was collected by the middle of last year, with the figure nearly hitting RM10mil the year before.

These funds have gone towards upgrading and maintaining tourism facilities, as well as enhancing the sector across the state.

At the Pahang Tourism Appreciation Night last year, Wan Rosdy emphasised the importance of unity in moving the sector forward:

"We need tourism industry players, government agencies, non-governmental organisations, and the media to work together to make Pahang the top tourist destination in Malaysia and globally."

Under the reign of Al-Sultan Abdullah, Pahang has found not only a unifying figure but a guiding light in its pursuit of balanced growth. Known for his humility, deep connection to the people, and advocacy for the environment, His Royal Highness has lent quiet strength to efforts that preserve the state's natural beauty and cultural dignity.

As visitors continue to discover Pahang's misty mountains, golden beaches and storied towns, they bear witness to a land shaped by both nature and noble leadership – a true crown jewel of Malaysia.

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DAULAT TUANKU

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KEBAWAH DULI PADUKA BAGINDA SULTAN PAHANG

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