

Malaysia Day Celebration with International Students Association (INSAN), University Sains Islam Malaysia (USIM)

Hiking at Melati Hill Trailhead, Bandar Baru Nilai, Negeri Sembilan

16th September 2020

&

International Le Tour De Campus, USIM

17th September 2020

This is how we spend our splendid time together!

Nestled behind Taman Desa Melati in Bandar Baru Nilai, Melati Hill Trailhead is a neighbourhood trail that is amply sign-posted and so well utilised by the local community, that it has its own lost and found treasure. Dreamed up by a local neurosurgeon, Dr. Johari Aziz, *Bukit Melati* remained relatively under the radar, gaining wider popularity with beginner hikers. Its varied terrain and choice of paths makes it popular with all levels of ramblers and runners looking for a quick workout, while the presence of stalls selling refreshments and pre-loved hiking gear transforms its foothill with a festive atmosphere on weekends. Consist of 4 trailheads including a tarred road are located but the main trailhead begins to the left of *Na Du Gong Temple*. Leads up towards Centipede, Monkey, Cobra and Mosquito Hills, each was designed by the good doctor to be of different lengths and levels of difficulty so that he could recommend them to different patients at different stages of their recovery.

Let's check out our student's hiking escape to *Bukit Melati* and their cycling experience!





4 trailheads



Na Du Gong Temple



The view of misty Hill



Some warm-up before going up the hill



The sun rise-up at Centipede Hill



A brief meeting with the students on Monkey Hill



Leaving the Malaysia Day Spirit on Monkey Hill



End of the journey. Tiring yet satisfying!



International Le Tour De Campus, USIM!



This is what they say!



“Amid the Covid-19 pandemic, local students would return to the villages, leaving most international students by themselves in dorms and apartments, a sometimes lone and gloomy experience we had during this challenging year. However, it was refreshing to be invited for hiking and bike riding by USIM ‘Alamiyyah (International Center) over the course of the week. We started off with an early morning hike at Melati Hill, with a healthy attendance of 20 international students and USIM ‘Alamiyyah staff. For most, it was a first, and the experience was made memorable as it was shared with other familiar as well as new faces of international students of all levels, from Bachelor degree to PhD. We all cruised through the thick forest in perfect formation, climbing steep landscapes and passing beautiful ponds as we hiked by. The pain in our joints and muscles were short-lived, as it was very liberating to finally engage in a group activity

with others, which promoted a sense of brotherhood and sisterhood amongst ourselves. That sense of unionism was further corroborated by a cycling activity which followed by the next day. We all assembled at Pusat Sukan with as much energy as we had shown at the Melati hill. As was with the hiking, USIM ‘Alamiyyah staff hopped on bikes as well and joined the experience. We all ride around the campus twice during the warm Wednesday afternoon with a sense of belonging, good spirit and friendship. While riding as one team, we admired the surrounding greenery and tranquility of the slow, quiet campus for almost two hours before retiring back to the sports centre with each bike perfectly lined up and ready for pictures. It indeed is difficult being away from home and family, however, we thank the USIM ‘Alamiyyah staff for being friendly and supportive as always, and most importantly, for making us all feel that we have not been left out — for making us belong.”

Waka A. A. O. Jeng, The Gambia

Masters, Faculty of Science and Technology, USIM



"When I read the announcement of the activity related to climbing, I felt excited, this will be an opportunity to practice an activity that I had not done before, and since I represent the Palestinian students at the university, I shared the announcement of the activity with all the students and encouraged them to participate. On the morning of 09/16, the students gathered with the staff of USIM 'Alamiyyah and the journey began. We started our journey with Doa'a, done a small warm-up, then went uphill.

We climbed the twisting and steep roads, we were very tired, but cheering each other up, a wonderful and beautiful feeling that everyone around you, you see the beauty of nature, the tall trees and pools of water collected from the rain, you feel excited to reach the top. The more difficult the road, the more insistent we get.

Finally, we have reached the top. Our joy and enthusiasm were unspeakable. We made some memories by taking pictures. There were some lovely little monkeys around us and they were picking up food from our hands.

When we set off to descend, we found out that it is more difficult than going up, which requires you to take care of yourself and others. You must form a team to land safely.

We came to the end in peace. Absolutely felt tired, but we felt strength, calmness, and peace in our souls. We kindly ask (INSAN) and USIM 'Alamiyyah to hold more activities like this. We said goodbye to each other and continued waiting for cycling activity

On the day for the cycling activity, students of different nationalities gathered in the university's sports arena we greeted each other with smiles, pleasure, and enthusiasm to participate in the activity. We started in a group, hovering around each other feeling joy and happiness, and taking lots of special and wonderful pictures for the memory. We kindly ask (INSAN) and USIM 'Alamiyyah to hold more activities like this. We said goodbye to each other and continued our day with a new spirit and great energy."

Adham M.M Alankar, Palestine

PhD, Faculty of Science and Technology, USIM



During Covid-19 pandemic lock down loneliness was my neighbor, not in a physical prison but I was in prison, I tried to get through each day by forgetting dates or days of the week, it was a nightmare for me that love interacting with people around but here is an ugly pandemic that doesn't spare the old and young. Emotionally and psychologically I was drained, I just needed to escape. Hey! An opportunity came to bike ride and hike with my fellow students (INSAN) and USIM 'Alamiyyah staff, wow! I was super excited that we could do these activities like we did before the pandemic. It was indeed a lovely experience reaching Melati Hills and seeing all the excited faces brought healing to my soul... then the journey began with some warm up which was led by Assan Jeng a masters students in faculty of science and technology an indigene of the Gambian after which instructions were given by Mrs. Nur Sakeenah, the international student advisor from USIM 'Alamiyyah, prayers were led by Iyad Abusalah a Phd student in faculty of Leadership and Management, an indigene of Palestine.

We proceed by hiking into the thick hilly forest, rounded by refreshing greens, fresh air, and the sweet voices of birds. Going up was a bit difficult but we all supported each other, waited for each other no one was left behind. Reaching the Centipede hills we stop to rest and take some lovely pictures, everyone was trying to catch their breath after an exhausting journey, finally, we proceeded to the Monkey hill at first I thought I won't be able to get to the top because the landscapes were so steep but I made it with the support of other students. Pictures were taken and we had a brief meeting chaired by Mrs. Sakeenah she expressed that she was so happy with the way students showed up to the event and also encouraged that we should all work together then she asked the secretary general of INSAN about the upcoming planned events in the person of Aquila Modupe Otitoju a PhD student in Faculty of Major Language an indigene of Nigeria she briefed the students on the planned upcoming events: Zoo Trip in October, Student Election in October, Hi-tea Party with USIM Management. The secretary encouraged students to take part in all the programs.

After the brief meeting we all headed down the hill and reaching the ground we did some warm up and we closed the event. The following day 17th of September 20 students met at the sport center USIM for bike riding both undergraduate and post graduate international students. We all registered our bicycles and took some pictures and started riding it was so refreshing and a feeling of freedom.

All thanks to INSAN and USIM 'Alamiyyah for giving us these great opportunities to create wonderful memories!

Aquila Modupe Otitoju, Nigeria

PhD, Faculty of Major Language Studies, USIM