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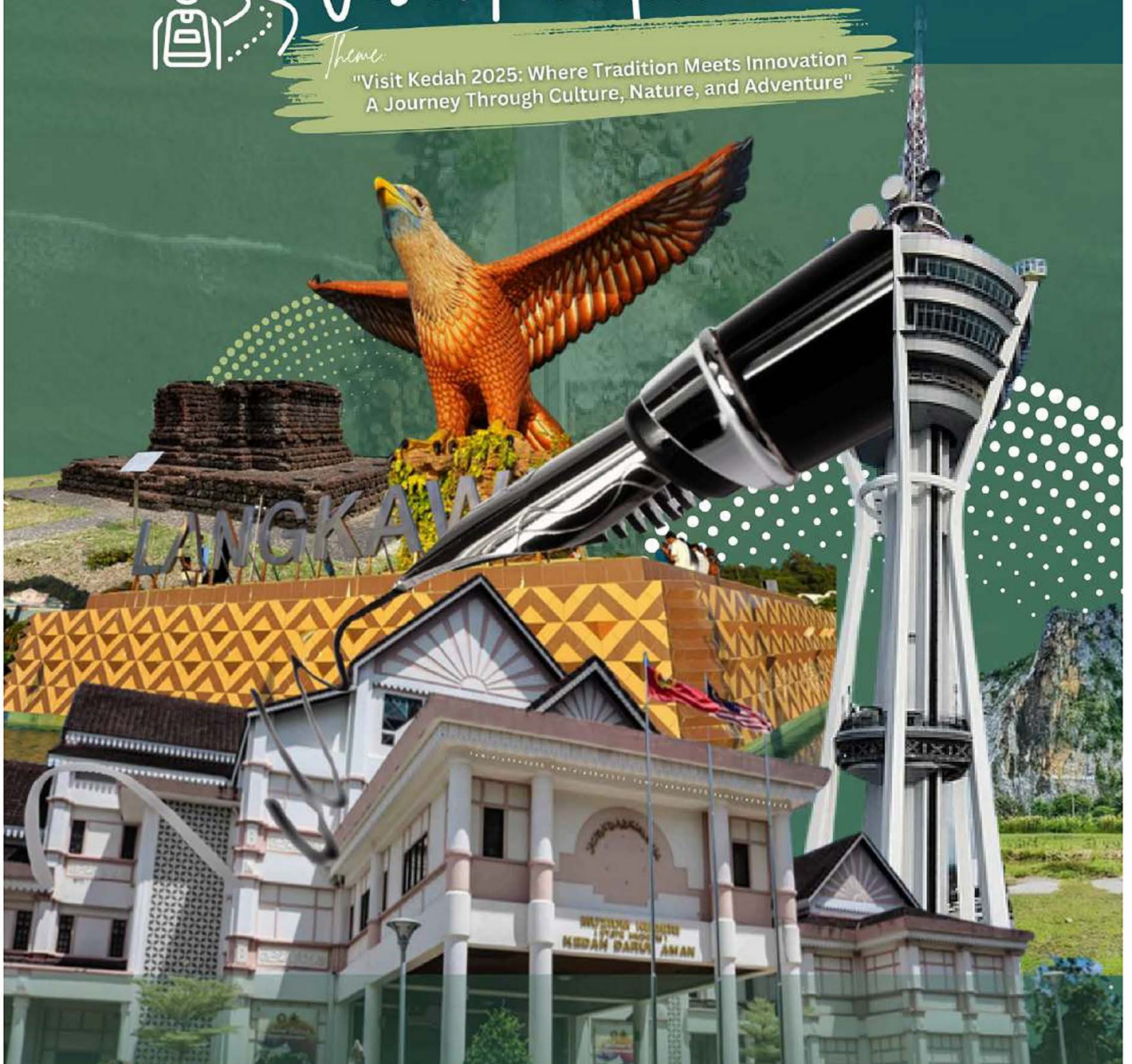


APB Kedah (e-magazine)

SPECIAL ISSUE EPITOME

Visit Kedah 2025

Theme:
"Visit Kedah 2025: Where Tradition Meets Innovation –
A Journey Through Culture, Nature, and Adventure"





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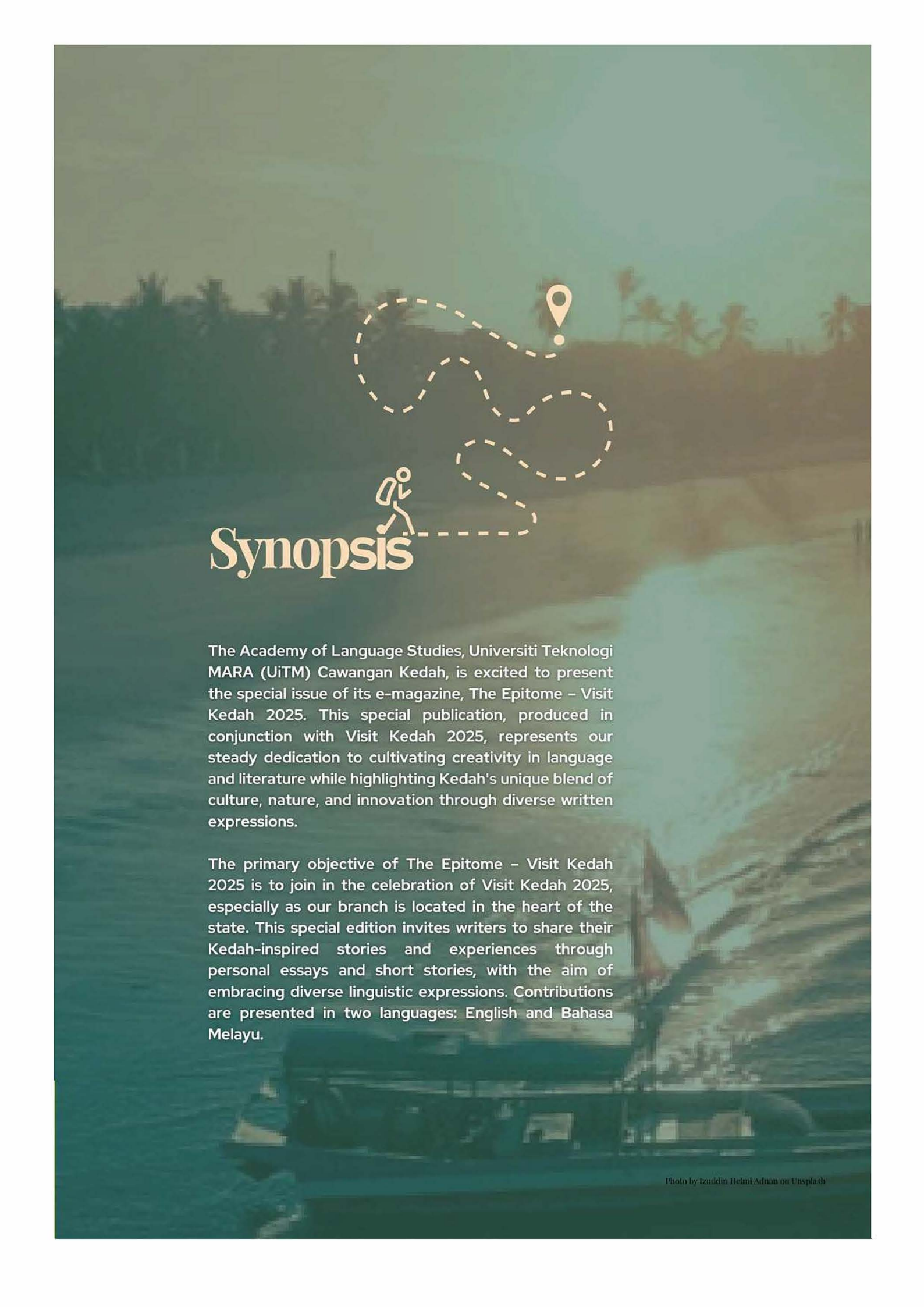
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Synopsis

The Academy of Language Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA (UiTM) Cawangan Kedah, is excited to present the special issue of its e-magazine, *The Epitome – Visit Kedah 2025*. This special publication, produced in conjunction with Visit Kedah 2025, represents our steady dedication to cultivating creativity in language and literature while highlighting Kedah's unique blend of culture, nature, and innovation through diverse written expressions.

The primary objective of *The Epitome – Visit Kedah 2025* is to join in the celebration of Visit Kedah 2025, especially as our branch is located in the heart of the state. This special edition invites writers to share their Kedah-inspired stories and experiences through personal essays and short stories, with the aim of embracing diverse linguistic expressions. Contributions are presented in two languages: English and Bahasa Melayu.

face of Kedah

Mr. Azlan Abdul Rahman

Head of Faculty
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Welcome to this special edition of Epitome, where we embark on an exciting journey through the rich heritage, stunning landscapes, and vibrant culture of Kedah – one of Malaysia's most beloved and fascinating states.

As we look ahead to Visit Kedah 2025, this issue invites you to explore the treasures that await in this beautiful destination. From the serene beauty of Langkawi's beaches to the historical charm of Alor Setar, Kedah offers something for every traveller. Whether you are an adventure seeker, a history enthusiast, or someone simply in search of tranquillity, Kedah has it all.

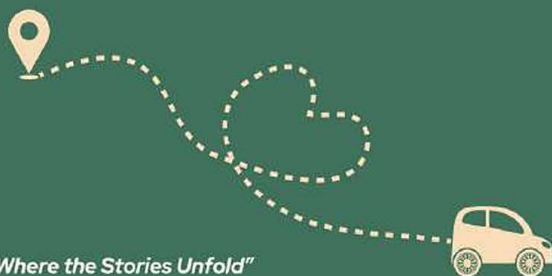
In the pages ahead, we delve into the many faces of Kedah, capturing the essence of its natural wonders, cultural landmarks, and unique experiences that define the state. Our stories, articles, and photographs will transport you to places where the past and present come together in perfect harmony – where lush green paddy fields stretch as far as the eye can see, and the rich flavours of local cuisine tantalize the senses.

Visit Kedah 2025 isn't just a campaign; it's an invitation to connect with the heart of Malaysia. It's an invitation to discover the unforgettable experiences that make Kedah a must-visit destination for travellers from around the world. In this edition, we hope to inspire you to plan your own journey to Kedah, whether it's to explore its breath-taking landscapes, immerse in its cultural heritage, or simply take in the warm hospitality of its people.

As you turn these pages, may you feel the spirit of Kedah calling to you – the call to discover, explore, and experience all that this incredible state has to offer.

Thank you for joining us on this exciting adventure. We hope to see you in Kedah in 2025!





Kedah, Where the Stories Unfold"

As the Chief Editor of Epitome, it gives me great pleasure to present this special edition in celebration of Visit Kedah Year 2025—an ode to a land where history, heritage, and heart live in every corner.

Nestled in the warm embrace of the northern Peninsula, Kedah is more than just Malaysia's rice bowl. It is a living canvas where time whispers through the ancient stones of Bujang Valley, dances across the rippling paddy fields, and echoes through the melodic drawl of the Kedahan dialect. Each tale we share in this issue draws its breath from Kedah's unique rhythm—where old meets new, tradition hugs the modern, and culture is not just remembered but lived.

From the misty peaks of Gunung Jerai, which once guided ancient mariners, to the shimmering flow of Sungai Merbok, where history quietly flows, Kedah's ecological richness is a story waiting to be told. Its mountains are guardians of myths; its rivers, keepers of memory. The lush rainforests, secret waterfalls, and wild orchids—all are pieces of a vibrant narrative woven by nature itself.

Yet, it is Kedah's people who breathe soul into this land. The warmth of pasar malam banter, the flavours of authentic laksa Kedah, the grace of traditional dance, and the way elders tell stories in that soft, endearing dialect—it all becomes poetry in motion. And in this special issue, we invite you to read, feel, and immerse yourself in the charm, wit, and wonder of Old Kedah and New Kedah alike.

Through creative fiction, heartfelt essays, and evocative poetry, Epitome brings together voices that sing of Kedah's mountains, rivers, food, language, and legacy. We hope this edition will not only inspire a visit but stir something deeper—a connection to the essence of a land that has long cradled Malaysia's earliest civilizations and continues to nurture its cultural heart.

Let the pages transport you to Kedah Darul Aman—a realm of peace, a sanctuary of stories.

Warmly,

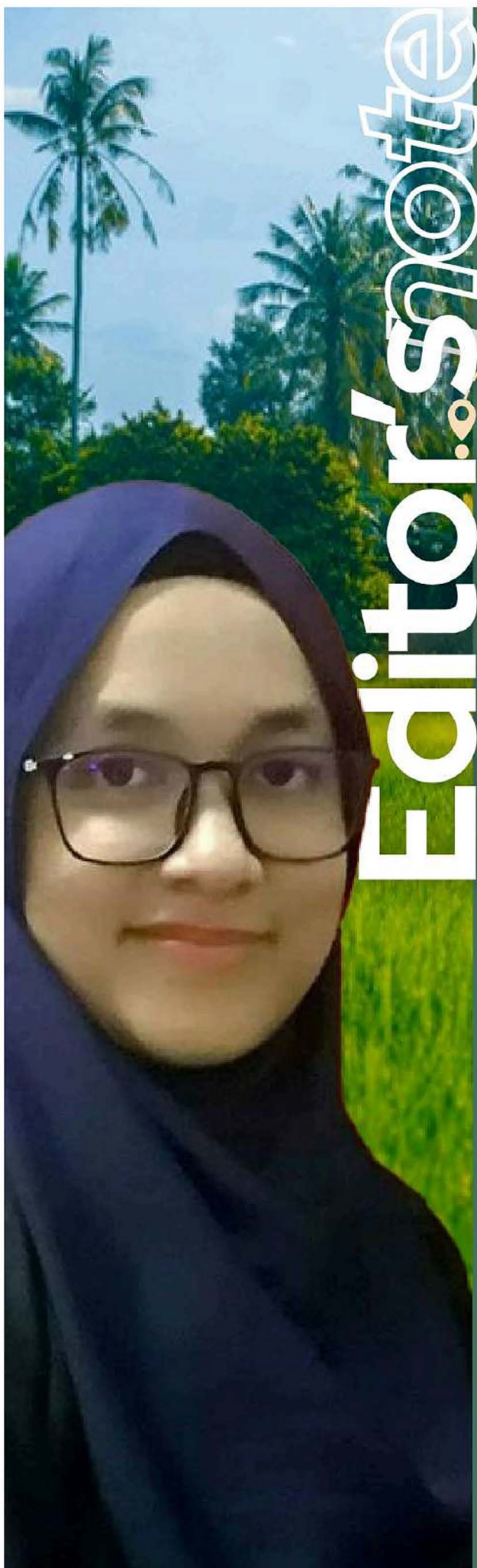
Razanawati Nordin

Chief Editor

THE EPITOME 2025

Editor's note





Editor's Note



It is with great pleasure that I present to you this special issue of The Epitome in conjunction with Visit Kedah 2025. I would like to extend my heartfelt thanks to the Head of Department for initiating this wonderful idea. As a proud Kedahan working in Kedah, I instantly agreed to be part of this project, knowing how close it is to my heart.

Reading the personal essays and short stories submitted by our contributors has been a truly enjoyable experience. I found myself smiling, reminiscing, and even imagining familiar places through their words. What makes this issue even more exciting is that some contributors are not originally from Kedah, yet they have beautifully shared their own reflections and experiences related to this charming state. Their fresh perspectives reminded me of the beauty I sometimes take for granted, having been born and bred in Kedah.

To all our contributors: thank you for your creativity, your voice, and for allowing us to travel through your narratives. Your stories have added soul and colour to this edition, and I hope our readers enjoy the journey through Kedah just as much as I did.

With appreciation,

Dr. Nur Syazwanie Mansor

Chief Editor, The Epitome
A Proud Kedahan

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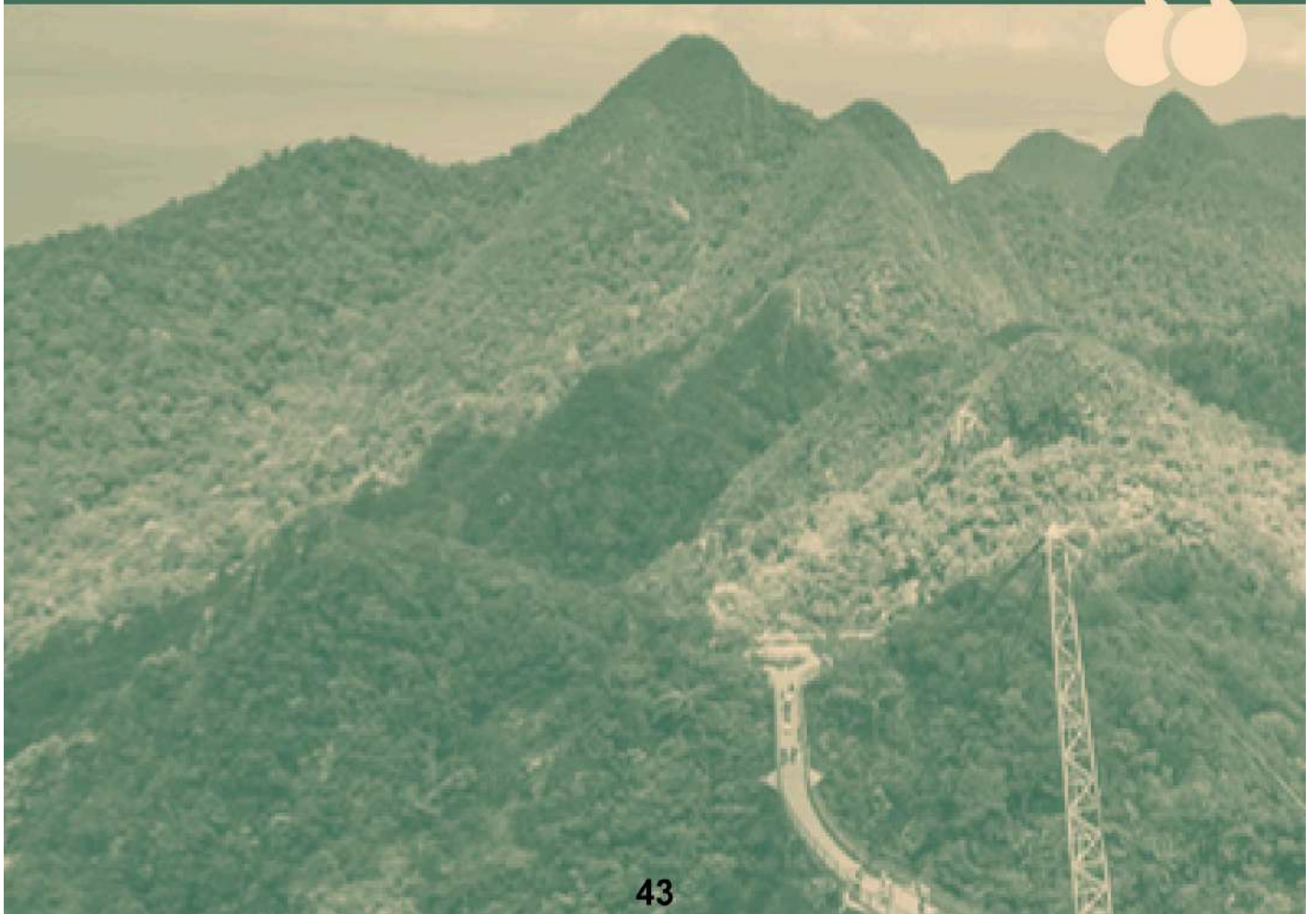
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NATURE, ADVENTURE & WELLNESS





Mount Jerai

It's Not Only About The Summit

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She listens patiently before suggesting I go hiking, proposing Mount Jerai as a great choice. "Alis, the hike might offer a new perspective and some clarity of mind. Why don't you give it a try?" she says. I hesitate at first, unsure, but after a moment of thought, I decide to give it a try. A week later, I stand at the foot of Mount Jerai, feeling a mix of hesitation and resolve. As I make my way up, the summit looms in the distance, and it leads me into an internal crisis. I wonder, back and forth in my thoughts. Just then, a group of tourists invites me to carpool with them to the Jerai Resort, where I can start my hike from there. I accept. It would be impossible to start from the foot—I'd never make it to the summit until tomorrow.

We part ways upon arriving at the resort. Their destination is the resort, while mine is the summit—an unknown that promises something worthwhile. As a beginner and alone, I stick to the paved road trail. The mist lingers from the morning's rain, and the cool breeze greets me, offering a strange comfort. Nature seems to welcome me, and for a moment, it feels as though the breeze is taking some of my worries with it. My anxiety subsides slightly, replaced by an adrenaline rush. Excitement, perhaps?

I now face a choice I never thought I would have to make. Two options, both too precious to give up—love or dreams—are on the line. I can't help but wonder which one holds more value for me right now. Overwhelmed, I feel suffocated every time I'm pushed to choose, and soon, my vision starts to narrow. As the darkness closes in, I suddenly see a light—it's my mentor from my first year of work. For a moment, I forget all my worries. But my dark expression doesn't go unnoticed, and she immediately asks, "Is everything okay, Alisa?" That simple question makes me break down in tears, and I pour out all my worries to her.

The hike begins. I pace myself, trying not to be distracted by the faster hikers ahead. It's naive of me to think the hike would be easy. The road stretches endlessly before me, each step harder than the last. Some edges are narrow and steep—one wrong move, and I could fall. I see cars driving up to the summit, and I wonder, "Am I making a big mistake?" How can this hike bring me peace of mind when all I feel is fatigue? How can it help solve my problems?

As the journey continues, the hike becomes easier. I stop to rest at the side of the path, munching on an energy bar. I close my eyes, letting the sounds of crickets and birds fill my ears. The hikers' footsteps are oddly soothing. In that moment, the tension that had gripped me begins to melt away.





I resume my hike, feeling lighter with each step. As my breath becomes heavier and my heart beats faster, I know I'm almost there. The summit must be magnificent. When I reach the junction, I turn left toward Padang Tok Sheikh—the final stretch. The path is narrower and steeper, and the fog surrounding it only deepens my sense of awe. All the fatigue I had before disappears the moment I see the scene before me. I'm fortunate it rained last night—only then could I see this view.

Reaching the summit, I'm struck by the sight of Batu Shaff, where stones are naturally arranged like saf in a mosque. It humbles me. Some hikers take the opportunity to perform Dhuha prayer, praising Allah's greatness. My amazement deepens as I take in the full beauty of the view. The cold air, mixed with the clouds below, forms a wide white carpet—a sight I've never had the chance to enjoy before. The breeze is not just cold but strong, as if patting me on the shoulder.

I have acrophobia, but I muster up the courage to take a step toward the edge of the summit. There, amid the passing clouds, I see the whole forest below, the sun hiding behind the cloudy sky. It's not the bright view most people expect, but it has its own charm. I love it. I sit on a stone, savoring the view, knowing no camera could capture the magic of the moment. I praise Allah for the beauty around me. For the first time, I stop thinking about my worries.

Then, I realize the hike to the summit doesn't directly solve my dilemma between love and dreams. But it offers me emotional release and clarity of mind. I needed a new perspective—just a step back, whether through a physical journey or an emotional one. The space to break free from indecision and find the answer within myself is all I really need.

Mount Jerai offers more than just a physical challenge—it's a place of reflection and tranquility, easily accessible via the paved road trail. Whether you seek adventure, solitude, or simply a breathtaking view, the hike provides an opportunity for personal growth and a fresh perspective. It invites me to pause, breathe, and reflect on life's journey—and it can do the same for you.

The summit isn't just a destination; it's a moment of self-discovery, a space to find clarity. If you ever feel lost or uncertain, or if you're looking for a peaceful escape from life's noise, I encourage you to make the journey. Mount Jerai is waiting for you to find the clarity you need—one step at a time.



Nur Areena Aqilah is a writer at heart who sees writing as her favorite escape from the world. She earned her Master's degree in Library Science from Universiti Teknologi MARA and spent six lively years as a librarian at Sunway JB Library & Learning Commons. Along the way, she juggled roles as a social media manager and library marketer. As a lecturer now, she enjoys sharing these stories with her students, demonstrating that librarianship is far from boring!



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