

# UMS to hold community-based tourism symposium in December

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**KOTA KINABALU:** The Borneo Tourism Research Centre (BTRC) at Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) will host a Community Based Tourism (CBT) Symposium in collaboration with Sabah Tourism Board.

The symposium will be held on Dec 2 with the theme 'Rural Tourism Prosperity: Transforming the Well-Being of Local Communities'.

As the recovery of tourism continues, it is timely to deliberate on the importance of the CBT model in ensuring shared prosperity amongst destination communities.

The symposium will take place in a hybrid mode, on-site at UMS and via Webex for remote attendees. Registration will open next month.

Recently, Director of BTRC, Dr Balvinder K. Kler and her team of researchers paid a courtesy call to Noredah Othman, the Chief Executive Officer of Sabah Tourism Board to consolidate plans for the CBT Symposium and discuss further collaborations on research and training.

BTRC hopes to document the important role played by Sabah Tourism Board over the

past three decades to chart tourism strategies which continue to bear fruit as seen in the growth of rural tourism products.

Sabah offers numerous niche markets for example ecotourism including birdwatching, dive tourism, and adventure tourism.

A recently published book chapter focuses on another important niche market in Sabah.

Titled 'Battlefield Tourism: the Legacy of Sandakan in Malaysian Borneo' is co-authored by Dr Balvinder and Cassie Forsythe, Communications & Digital Manager, STB. This publication is one of 36 chapters in the 'Handbook of Niche Tourism' edited by the world renowned Professor Marina Novelli and colleagues published by Edward Elgar Publishing.

The chapter documents how the tragedy of war in Borneo evolved into a niche market for tourism and also explores stakeholder relationships to battlefield sites around Sabah. Both parties agreed to strengthen the relationship to ensure research conducted at the university is impactful for the community and industry.



Noredah (left) showing the book which is presented by Dr Kler (centre). On the right is Cassie.