

Melting pot of healing cultures

MALAYSIA is truly blessed. We have an amazing history and geography that could make us the world leader in Asian Traditional Medicine.

According to the Guinness Book of World Records, our rainforests are more than 130 million years old. We were never hit by the ice age, unlike the Amazon.

This also means that our forests have been the test bed of more than 130 million years of evolution.

Our flora and fauna have had tremendous opportunity to evolve, giving us an amazing biodiversity.

Indeed, we are a mega diversity nation. We rank No 12 worldwide and No 4 in Asia — behind India, China and Indonesia. One in eight of the species found on the planet live amongst us!

We are just as blessed geographically. We snugly fit just above the equator. We have the hills that form the backbone of the peninsula and the highest mountain in Southeast Asia. We are surrounded by sea.

That is not all. We are equidistant from India and China. This has made it possible for people of these lands to come and settle here.

For more than 500 years the traditions — including that of health and healing — of the people of In-



dia, China and Indonesia have been intermingling with that of the indigenous people.

This cross fertilisation of cultures has resulted in a rich hybrid of Asian Traditional Medicine here.

It is perfectly natural for a Malay man to seek acupuncture treatment as it for a Chinese woman to seek Ayurvedic help just as it is no big deal for an Indian woman to go looking for a sinseh.

While we take it for granted, it happens only here and nowhere else. This makes Malaysia the ideal host for the World Health and Asian Traditional Medicine or WHATmedicine for short (www.whatmedicine.org).

However, there have been three earlier events with the same WHATmedicine acronym but focusing on Women's Health and Asian Traditional Medicine. The international advisory board mooted for the event to be extended to World Health



WHATmedicine will be held at Putra World Trade Centre, Kuala Lumpur on June 19-21.

Log on to www.whatmedicine.org for more information

and Asian Traditional Medicine.

We are pleased to have so many partners of world standing. Among them are:

- National Centre for Natural Products Research based in the University of Mississippi, the US.
 - University of Hamdard, New Delhi, India
 - University of Tsinghua, China
 - Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine
 - Halal Development Corporation
- Locally, we have Universiti Sains Malaysia, Universiti Kebangsaan, Universiti Putra Malaysia, Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute (Mardi), Forest Re-

search Institute of Malaysia and Standards Research Institute of Malaysia (Sirim). The event is supported by the Health Ministry.

Some of the world's most qualified people attending the conference are:

- Professor Larry Walker, head, National Centre For Natural Products Research
- Tan Sri Dr Ismail Merican, Director-General of Health, Malaysia
- Professor Datuk Zakri Abdul Hamid, Universiti Sains Malaysia
- Professor Gulam Nabi Qazi, vice-chancellor, University of Hamdard, India
- Datuk Dr Nor Shahidah Khairullah, Malaysian Liver Foundation, Malaysia
- Professor Zhang, University of Tsinghua, China
- Dr Sarang Bani, Indian Institute of Integrative Medicine, India
- Professor Yves Henrion, University of Liège, Belgium
- Dr Deborah Cooper, Colltech, West Perth, Australia
- Professor Nantavan Bunyaphatsara, Mahidol University, Thailand.

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