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Villagers' close encounter with Bigfoot

STORY AND PIC BY FARIK ZOLKEPLI

KLUANG: It looks human but has fur the shades of dark red and black covering its face and body, stands about 4m tall and lets out a loud roar.

That is how the orang asli villagers from Batu 25, Kampung Punjat Sungai Nadik, in Kahang, about 190km from Johor Baru, described a creature known as *siamang* or better known as Bigfoot.

One of the villagers supposedly even had a 15-minute standoff with the creature and has stopped going into the jungle alone.



A 40cm to 50cm footprint of the Bigfoot discovered in Mawai, Kota Tinggi, recently. The print was found in mud after a group of workers tracked down the creature to a river.

Recalling his horrifying experience four months ago, Amir Md Ali said he was catching frogs in the Gunung Panti jungles to sell when he stumbled upon the creature.

"I was heading to my favourite spot when I suddenly saw this tall creature about 30m away.

"I was trembling with fear as the creature stared at me," he said, adding that he did not move for about 15 minutes.

Amir, who initially thought the creature would leave, decided to run when the creature continued to stare at

him.

"I did not look back and continued running until I reached my village," he said, showing a clearing in the jungle where the

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standoff occurred to some 50 people who took part in an expedition to gather information on the Bigfoot sightings in the state.

The one-day expedition, led by Johor National Parks director Hashim Yusof, comprised park officials and press members.

Another villager, Herman Deraman, 21, or better known as Along, had a closer encounter with the creature in the woods.

“I was resting one night in a wooden hut on stilts after a long day of collecting bamboo strips.

“Suddenly, the hut started shaking violently,” he said, adding that soon after that, he heard a loud roar that sounded like that of a wild beast.

That incident kept him awake the whole night.

The next day, he encountered the creature again but this time at the place he usually gathered bamboo.

“I thought I saw a tree shaking but after a while, I realised there was a huge creature sitting down and rubbing itself against the tree.

“Luckily, the creature did not see me as its back was facing me,” he said.

Kampung Punjat Sungai Nadik is home to about 30 orang asli families who earn a living by gathering and selling produce collected from the jungle.

Hashim said the expedition was aimed at ascertaining the truth on the existence of the Bigfoot.

“We want to uncover the truth about this creature and also quash any rumour that can scare away visitors to the national park,” he said, adding that some 124,000 people visited the parks annually.

Hashim said they were also compiling a database on Bigfoot or *orang mawas* sightings at various spots.



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