



TARIKH / HARI	19/02/2024 ISNIN
AKHBAR / MUKA SURAT	THE STAR MIS 4

Highway construction driving wildlife out of their homes

By **IMRAN HILMY**
imran@thestar.com.my

GEORGE TOWN: Wild animals are on the loose. Deforestation and the hot weather are driving them out of their natural habitat to look for food.

Some of these animals have been reported to wander around the streets and neighbourhoods near Ayer Itam and Island Park where there is an ongoing highway project.

Seri Delima assemblyman Connie Tan said her team and Wildlife and National Parks Department (Perhilitan) visited a few areas to investigate complaints by residents of the presence of wild monkeys roaming

their neighbourhood.

“Perhilitan has placed a cage to trap the monkeys at Krystal Heights Apartment and another one in Jalan Tembaga.

“I would like to remind all residents not to feed the wild monkeys with food scraps as this will encourage them to gather near your houses,” she said.

Costing RM851mil, the 6km bypass that links Ayer Itam to the Tun Dr Lim Chong Eu Expressway is part of the Penang Transport Master Plan and is expected to be completed in 2025.

The bypass is expected to reduce travel time and bring long-term benefits to Penang residents, especially the 300,000 living in Ayer Itam, Bandar Baru Ayer Itam and

the adjoining Paya Terubong.

Civil Defence Force (APM) assistant director (operation sector) Mejar (PA) Kamal Jakarinah said the hot weather was also one of the reasons the wild animals emerge from their comfort zone to look for food to survive.

“Animals like snakes and other reptilians were often found in dirty and damp places where they can easily catch rats and other animal carcasses,” he said.

Kamal said the team solved 6,187 cases or 46% of the total 13,373 reported cases they received for the whole of 2023.

“From that number, we caught 3,398 poisonous reptiles,” he said.

> SEE NEXT PAGE



Nowhere to go: APM personnel attempting to capture a civet after receiving reports from a resident in a housing area in Penang.