

# ASIACRYPT 2007 draws first-time visitors

**KUCHING:** The latest international conference in Kuching, ASIACRYPT 2007, drew many first-time visitors to Sarawak and is expected to impact the State's tourism sector.

Here to present and learn advancement in cryptology and information security, the majority of them were from East Asia, Europe and US.

The general chair of ASIACRYPT 2007, Raphael Phan, a Sarawakian, was happy to organise the international event.

"ASIACRYPT is one of the top three cryptology conferences in the world, and this is the first time the conference is held in Malaysia," he said when interviewed yesterday.

He said the organisers did not have a hard time attracting participants as it was an event cryptologists worldwide looked forward to.

At final count, 176 were attending the conference. There were about 30 research papers from about 200 submitted each year, selected through a strict refereeing process.

The delegates and speakers were mostly into outdoor activities, with many of them asking organisers for directions and locations of popular destinations in the State.

The guided excursion or field trip to Semenggok Wildlife Centre and Annah Rais Longhouse was popular

with the participants who had read about Sarawak in books and documentaries.

"Our main concern is the weather as it had been raining the whole week. Thankfully, the day was sunny and fine when we went to Semenggok and Annah Rais," he said.

Phan, with École Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (EPFL), Switzerland, was the prime mover behind the bid to host Asiacrypt in Kuching during his days as director of the Swinburne Sarawak's Information Security Research (iSECURES) laboratory.

Hosting the conference is in line with Swinburne Sarawak's vision to be one of the leading research institutions in Malaysia.

Yesterday was the final day of the conference, and the focus was on public key encryption and cryptanalysis.

The winner of the Best Paper Award, Thomas Peyrin from France Telecom R&D presented a paper on Cryptanalysis of Grindahl.

Phan, in his short closing remarks, said he was happy with the smooth running of the conference and the support and cooperation given by all those involved.

He said the photographs would be uploaded into the Internet for participants to commemorate their stay and conferencing in Kuching.