

Delegates, speakers give thumbs up to organisers



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KUCHING: Delegates and speakers for the just concluded ASIACRYPT 2007 conference were unanimous in their praise for the organisers and their experience during their stay here.

During the conference they were served various local delicacies during the break and the night before the event ended they were treated to a banquet, and entertained with traditional music and dance. Each one of them was presented with a local handicraft as a souvenir.

That treatment went a long way in making the conference and their brief stay here a memorable one.

One of the participants Antoine Jaux gave the thumbs-up to the host for the success of the conference and giving participants a pleasant stay.

Antoine, who is one of the directors of International Association of Cryptology Research (IACR), said the conference was smoothly run and a great success.

"The conference is simply perfect ... organised in a nice environment, and in a new part of the world. I should say it is a very successful event. The response was good and I guess most of the participants enjoy their time in Kuching," said Antoine, who is also a professor at University Versailles, France.

Gaetan Leurent, a student from Ecole Normale Supérieure University in France, echoed Antoine's remarks, adding: "I'm pleased with the way the conference is held."

"Everything went smoothly. It's really great, the host is doing a good job," said Gaetan, who is on his first visit to Asia.

"There are many foreign participants coming ... like me, I guess the others also enjoyed their stay here. Personally, I find Kuching a nice place to visit. It is quite



LOCAL ORGANISERS: (From left) Dennis, Rosalind and Phan.

different in terms of landscape, people and weather. There are many interesting places to visit here like the museum," he said.

Cedric Jeannot, a student from the University of Louisville, United States, said he simply loved the colourful multi-ethnic culture of Sarawak.

"Kuching is a very interesting place, and it has interesting people and

"I love my stay here, the people are nice and there are many interesting places to visit," he added.

On the second day of the conference, the participants took time off between busy schedule to visit Semengok Wildlife Centre to watch the orang utan and Kampung Anah Rais, a Bidayuh village in Padawan.

At Kampung Anah Rais, they were welcomed with the Bidayuh traditional

University of Technology said they had been preparing to host the conference over the last two years.

He said Raphael Phan, who was then the director of iSECURE, together with Sarawak Tourism Board and SDI, made the bid for Kuching to host the conference in Korea in 2004.

"After we got it, we contacted the State government and Tourism Ministry of Malaysia for

"Our top worry had been the weather. Before the event started, it was raining the whole day in Kuching. It was lucky that it shone on the second day so the participants were able to take their day off to visit some places," he said.

"We are happy that there was no major hiccup during the conference. Everybody seems to be happy with the venue, the facilities and the treatment from the host," he said.

However, Phan said they would not claim credit for the good response from foreign participation, as international participants already knew about the conference two years ago.

"ASIACRYPT is currently one of the top three cryptology conferences in the world and it is already established internationally," he said.

"Our main objective of having it here is to attract the locals. In fact, IACR sponsored US\$5,000 to help the locals to get into the conference and 35 from various parts of the country participated in this conference," he added.

Altogether, 176 experts from universities and industry players from 30 countries including United States, United Kingdom, Belgium, France, China, Korea and Japan attended the conference.

Another co-chairperson Rosalind Wong from SDI said ground handling of the conference was rather easy so it did not need too much preparation.

"We are only taking care of the arrangement at local level like how to make the event or their stay here interesting.

"We try to localise the environment so that they can enjoy a new experience and have a memorable stay in Kuching," she said.

ASIACRYPT 2007 is an international conference on the 'Theory and Application of Cryptology and Information Technology.

Cryptology is the practice and study of hiding information and is considered to be a branch of both mathematics and computer science. It is affiliated closely with information theory, computer security and engineering.

It is used in applications present in technologically advanced societies; examples of cryptology usage include the security of ATM cards, computer passwords and electronic commerce.



ANTOINE: The conference is simply perfect.



GAETAN: Kuching is a nice place to visit.



JEANNOT: Simply loves the local culture.

culture. I find the landscape unique as the participants were treated to unique cultural performances during the banquet.

"Overall, everybody was taken care of, it's very good. The conference is well organised, the location is very good ... there is a shopping mall outside the hotel," he said.

Jeannot, who also attended the conference in China last year, said he would love to come back for more visits to the city in the future.

dance 'Rejang' and treated to local food.

The four-day ASIACRYPT 2007 at Hotel Crowne Plaza Riverside which ended last Thursday was organised by Information Security Research (iSECURE) Lab of Swinburne University of Technology (Sarawak Campus) and the Sarawak Development Institute (SDI), with support from the Sarawak government.

Co-chairperson Dennis Wong from Swinburne

sponsorship. The State government allocated US\$20,000 (RM76,000) to fund the organising of the event," he said.

Phan, who is a lecturer at Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Switzerland, said the conference was being held in different locations worldwide and bidding was normally done three years in advance.

He said Kuching was the 13th location while Australia and Japan would host the conference in 2008 and 2009.



PAYING ATTENTION: A section of the participants at the conference.