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World's highest mountain path opened

KUNDASANG: Mountain Torq Via Ferrata – the world's highest mountain path – opened here yesterday, the first such path to be built on Mount Kinabalu, South-East Asia's highest summit.

The path, a climbing facility named and built by Adventure Factors Mountaineering Centre Sdn Bhd, would further elevate the tourism industry's service standard and enhance Sabah's reputation as a world-class adventure destination, said State Tourism, Culture and Environment Minister Datuk Masidi Manjun.

“The tourism industry is a highly aggressive field and we are competing with other countries for the same customers.

“To stay competitive, we need to keep abreast of the current and future needs of this ever evolving industry,” he said in his speech at the opening of Mountain Torq Via Ferrata at Kinabalu Park here. (*Via ferrata* is Italian for iron road.)

Masidi's speech was delivered by his political secretary Datuk Amisah Yasin.

The Mountain Torq, with various routes, enables people of all ages to enjoy climbing Mount Kinabalu's rock faces, giving them a chance to view the mountain from different angles, said Eric Wong, Adventure Factors Mountaineering Centre's director.

Over the past 30 years, Mount Kinabalu's climbers' aim has been to climb up and come down in two days after having conquered the summit.

All they could remember was the gruelling five to eight hours' hike up, sleepless nights, trying to catch the sunrise and coming down the mountain.

“We felt we needed to give Mount Kinabalu the respect it deserves. So we came up with the idea of developing Mount Kinabalu into a mountaineering centre for South-East Asia,” Wong said.

He said Mountain Torq Via Ferrata, comprising rungs and cables embracing the mountain's rock face, is at 3,800m of the 4,095m mountain.

The path allows access to scenic sections of the summit normally accessible only to rock climbers and mountaineers, he added.

The *Malaysia Book of Records* certified the path as the world's highest. – Bernama