

“Explore UMT’s Latest Milestones: A World of Knowledge Awaits!”

“Tasik Berombak: A Jewel of Setiu Wetlands’ Ecosystem”

Located in **Setiu Wetlands**, Terengganu, Tasik Berombak is a biodiversity treasure, supporting mangrove forests, swamp ecosystems, and unique aquatic life. This area plays a crucial role in maintaining ecological balance, acting as a natural filter, a habitat for diverse flora and fauna, and a natural buffer against climate change.

Preserving the sustainability of Tasik Berombak is not just about conservation—it is about ensuring that the benefits of this rich ecosystem continue for generations to come.

Tasik Berombak, Setiu Wetlands, Terengganu

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MEDIA KREATIF
hafiza.ellias@umt.edu.my

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As we enter February, we are excited to bring you another edition of the UMT Newsletter, this time with a refreshed layout to enhance your reading experience. With these improvements, we aim to reach more readers and keep our collaborators, partners, and alumni well-informed about the latest developments at UMT.

This edition includes updates on our academic and research initiatives, industry collaborations, and lively campus activities. UMT continues to advance in marine and environmental research, enhancing our reputation as a leading institution. Furthermore, we emphasize recent events, student achievements, and ongoing projects illustrating the university's commitment to excellence.

In this issue, we share insights into UMT's latest international partnerships and joint research efforts, which create opportunities for greater knowledge exchange and innovation. These collaborations enhance our global presence and provide valuable chances for our students and researchers to interact with leading experts in various fields.

We encourage you to explore this newsletter's diverse content and stay connected with UMT's journey. Your feedback and engagement are crucial in shaping our future publications and ensuring they remain informative, engaging, and relevant to your interests. Let us know your thoughts.

We look forward to hearing from you!



Zukiferee bin Ibrahim
Executive Editor

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Executive Editor

Zukiferee bin Ibrahim

Content Advisors

Wan Zulkifli Wan Kassim
Shafie Umardi @ Kamarol Bahrin
Suhaili Safei
Wan Ab Hafiz Wan Ibrahim

Coordinators

Rozita Alias@Abdul Latiff
Amirul Salam Hasan

Designer

Adli Hashim

Photographers

Mohd Sharwan Abd Ghani
Mohd Shukry Tahar
Nur Hafiza Elias
Tg. Iskandar Zulfahmi Tg. Mohamad

Corporate Communications Office

Universiti Malaysia Terengganu

email : pro@umt.edu.my



Dear Colleague and Friends,

At Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT), we are driven by ambition, innovation, and an unwavering commitment to excellence. Our transformation from a modest marine research station in 1979 to a fully-fledged university in 2001 highlights our relentless pursuit of knowledge and impact. Today, we are an emerging force in marine sciences, maritime studies, technology, business, and the social sciences.

However, no journey to success is undertaken alone. To strengthen our position among the world's leading universities, we also rely on the support of industry leaders, visionary employers, and esteemed academic peers, locally and globally. With collaboration at the heart of our efforts, we continue to push boundaries and redefine what is possible.

We ask for your support as we aim for greater recognition in prestigious global university rankings. By standing with UMT, you're encouraging and affirming your belief in our mission and the impact we strive to make globally.

What may seem like a small action to you means the world to us. Together, let's elevate UMT to new heights. Thank you for standing with us and supporting our continued journey toward global prominence.

“Strengthening Togetherness Towards a World-Leading Marine University”

Best regards,

PROF. IR. TS. DR. MOHD ZAMRI IBRAHIM
Vice Chancellor



UNIVERSITI MALAYSIA TERENGGANU

"Terokaan Seluas Lautan, Demi Kelestarian Sejangat" | "Ocean of Discoveries, for Global Sustainability"

UMT Welcomes New Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic & International)

Nur Nadia Amira Noley, Chancellery

Professor Dr. Suriyani Muhamad has recently been appointed as the new Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic & International) of Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT). The university's very own has extensive experience as an academic and administrator, having served UMT for more than 26 years as a lecturer and assumed several administrative posts as well.

The appointment was made by Higher Education Minister Dato' Seri Diraja Dr. Zambry Abdul Kadir and is for a two-year term, commencing 19 January. Prof. Suriyani was presented with the appointment letter by Higher Education Director-General Datuk Professor Dr. Azlinda Azman in a ceremony at the Ministry of Higher Education.

Prof. Suriyani succeeded the former incumbent Professor Ir. Ts. Dr. Mohd Zamri Ibrahim, whom the ministry had earlier appointed as the new UMT Vice Chancellor.

Prof. Suriyani obtained her bachelor's degree in economics in 1999 from Universiti Malaya and her master's degree in 2001 from London School of Economics (LSE), United Kingdom. In 2007, she obtained her Doctor of Philosophy degree from the University of Manchester, United Kingdom.

Prof. Suriyani first became a tutor at UMT, formerly known as Kolej Universiti Terengganu (KUT), in 1999. Throughout her career, she has been trusted with various administrative posts, such as Head of Department of Economics, Deputy Dean (Academic and Students Affairs), and Deputy Dean (Talent and Research).

In July 2015, Prof. Suriyani was appointed as the Dean of the School of Economics and Social Development. She decided to take a sabbatical leave in 2018 to strengthen and expand her expertise in the academic



field after having assumed administrative roles for nearly 10 years.

In August 2022, she was once again appointed as the Dean of the Faculty of Business, Economics, and Social Development, in recognition of her previous achievements and administrative commitment.

She vacated the post in January 2025 after she was appointed as the new Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic & International) of UMT.

As the new incumbent to the post, Prof. Suriyani is committed to driving excellence in teaching and learning at UMT. "I hope that all staff will collaborate and work as one team to enhance the academic excellence of UMT students," said the seventh Deputy Vice Chancellor (Academic & International).

She also intends for UMT to continue its rapid growth with the goal of improving its ranking both nationally and internationally. "My aim is for UMT to gain recognition on the global stage through partnerships with leading universities worldwide, student exchange programmes, and participation in global research projects," said Prof. Suriyani, the second female to hold the post at UMT.

UMT, UDINUS Sign MoU to Strengthen Academic, Research Collaborations

Associate Prof. Ts. Dr. Shahrul Ismail, Faculty of Ocean Engineering Technology

UMT and Indonesia's Universitas Dian Nuswantoro (UDINUS) recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), marking a significant step in fostering academic and research cooperation between the two universities.



The agreement paves the way for innovative projects and cross-border educational experiences, reflecting the commitment of both universities to global academic excellence.

Through the agreement, both universities aim to enhance collaboration in health sciences, student and staff exchanges, joint research initiatives, and capacity-building programmes.

The signing ceremony took place at UMT and was attended by administrative leaders from both universities, including UMT Vice Chancellor Professor Ir. Ts. Dr. Mohd Zamri Ibrahim and UDINUS's Faculty of Health Sciences Dean Prof. Dr. Enny Rachmani.

Prof. Enny expressed her enthusiasm for the collaboration. "This MoU opens new doors for both our institutions to work together in advancing health sciences education and research," she said. "We look forward to fruitful partnerships that will benefit our students, faculty, and the broader academic community."

Also present was UMT's Associate Professor Ts. Dr. Shahrul Ismail, who played a crucial role in facilitating discussions and aligning the goals of both institutions prior to the MoU signing.

As part of the MoU, UMT provides opportunities for UDINUS academic staff to pursue their PhD studies at the university, particularly in the fields of health sciences, environmental sustainability, and biotechnology. This initiative aims to strengthen research collaborations and enhance the academic qualifications of UDINUS's faculty members.

Key benefits of this PhD programme include:

- Joint supervision from both UMT and UDINUS faculty members to ensure knowledge transfer and research excellence.
- Scholarship and funding support for selected candidates based on merit and research proposals.
- Access to UMT's state-of-the-art research facilities in environmental sciences, marine biotechnology, and health sciences.
- Opportunities for collaborative research leading to high-impact publications in international journals.

Following the signing ceremony, a workshop was held that focused on sustainable and affordable water treatment using chitosan based on low-cost adsorbent from green mussel.

Before the official MoU signing, both institutions had engaged in several activities to establish a strong foundation for collaboration. These include:

- Academic discussions and scientific article writing workshops: Faculty members from both universities participated in knowledge-sharing sessions focused on health sciences, digital innovation, and interdisciplinary research opportunities.
- Research collaboration meetings: Representatives discussed potential joint research projects, funding opportunities, and exchange programs for students and lecturers.
- Campus and lab visits: UDINUS delegates toured UMT's research facilities, including laboratories and innovation hubs, to explore possible areas of cooperation.
- Student engagement sessions: Students from both universities interacted through international summer school to share learning experiences and discuss future challenges and research opportunities.

UMT Students Compete in International Tournament

Mohd Hafizi Said & Noor Hidayah Mat Isa, Sailing Training Centre

Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT) and four of its students had every reason to feel proud at a recent tournament although victory escaped them.

Among the 35 teams from all parts of the world that participated in the Royal Langkawi International Regatta (RLIR) in January, only the team from UMT consisted of university students.

The four students competed under the IRC 2 class, going against powerful teams from Australia, Japan, Korea, China, Russian, Germany, Thailand, and Singapore.

Nurul Izzryn Nor Hassan, 22, Amirul Hafeez Mohamed Masarik, 20, Arfan Sulaiman Abu Bakar, 20, and K. Viisnuu, 20, from various disciplines rode UMT's racing-team boat Telaga Sail99 helmed by Ku Anas Ku Zamil, a former national sailing athlete now serving as a coach at UMT. The four students also received training from UMT sailing coach Nor Naeilah Nor Hassan.

The students were only able to train for three weeks, but that did not dampen their competitive spirit.

The main challenge was the short training period, but the students worked hard at practicing all the sailing skills they had learned at the university, the coach said.

Another issue was that the boat they used during training was different than the one during the actual race, and it takes time to get acclimatized to something new, added the coach.

For Nurul Izzryn, first year fisheries student, taking part in the tournament was a priceless experience.

"The conditions during the actual races were different from the training sessions, but my friends and I took every opportunity to watch experienced sailors and gain new first-hand knowledge that is hard to come by at other places," she said. "While we were practicing, the water was calm, but at RLIR the condition of the sea and the wind were different, and these posed a great challenge to us.

In addition, 15 UMT students were invited to the tournament to be part of the technical team. This marked the fourth year of UMT representatives being invited to join the technical team during the tournament. This speaks volumes of the organizer's trust towards the expertise and skills of UMT students in sailing.

For this year the UMT team received sponsorship from Royal Langkawi Yacht Club and Telaga Harbour Sdn. Bhd, a company offering marina management and services, yacht management and services, and yacht sales and chartering.



UMT Expertise Sought to Ensure Project's Success

Siti Nurhasmira Abu Hassan, Centre for Knowledge Transfer, Industry and Community Linkages

A government-funded project has recently been launched, and Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT) is heavily involved in it. A team of UMT researchers specializing in aquaculture technology has been trusted to ensure the success of the project.

The project with a fund of RM100,000 is being carried out at Kampung Padang Limau Nipis, a locality about 30 kilometres from UMT.

The project is under the SejaTI MADANI programme, an initiative introduced by the government to boost economic activities among communities and enable them to augment their income.

The project is based on integrated aquaculture, where tilapia farming is combined with vegetable cultivation for better effectiveness and efficiency.

The team of UMT researchers appointed as project advisors is led by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Liew Hon Jung from the Institute of Tropical Aquaculture and Fisheries. They are responsible for providing guidance to the project participants on aquaculture-related aspects, fish food nutrition, and management of an integrated fish farming and plant cultivation system.

To kickstart the project, participants have set up 10 canvas tanks for tilapia rearing. Each tank will be able to accommodate 500 tilapias, which means the total will reach 5000.

Participants will also be exposed to effective vegetable cultivation techniques. Waste water from the fish tanks will be used to water the plants, which will also fertilize the soil and expedite plant growth. This is an example of a sustainable agriculture that greatly benefits the communities as well as supports United Nation's Sustainable Development Goals (SDG).

With continuous guidance and supervision, participants will be able to harvest the tilapias within four to five months and the vegetables within three months. Each family involved in the project is expected to earn an average income of RM2,500 per month, which will definitely improve their standards of living.

When this project is successfully completed, it will become a model that can be implemented at other places to help improve the local economies there.

During the launching ceremony at the project's site in January, tilapia seeds have been released into the fish



tanks in the presence of local leaders, government agency representatives, and the local residents. In his speech, Tuan Azmi Tuan Mohd Yuseri Isa, Alur Limbat state constituency coordinator, expressed his full support towards the project that not only provides economic benefit but also introduces a more sustainable farming and aquaculture method.

UMT Distributes RM632,000 to over 1000 Needy Students

Rodiah Mustafa, UMT Ihsan Centre

More than 1000 selected students of Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT) were all smiles recently when the university presented them with financial aids of different types totalling RM632,000.

The event took place in a special ceremony in January and was attended by UMT's top management.

The aids were intended to lessen the students' financial burden so they can focus on their academic efforts. In line with UMT's commitment to helping the needy students, the university offers several forms of financial aids, including tuition fee aid, living allowance, and aids related to natural disasters such as flood.

The chosen students were those under the low-income bracket and with academic excellence and those befallen with tragedy.

Money for the aids came from zakat contributions by several of UMT's corporate "buddies." UMT also invited them to the event to convey its appreciation for their contributions.

A total of 681 students received a RM500 living allowance, courtesy of zakat funds from Lembaga Tabung Haji, Maybank Islamic Berhad, and Majlis Agama Islam dan Adat Melayu Terengganu (MAIDAM). Another 100 who required a bigger help received a RM1000 living allowance, channelled through zakat fund from Petronas Asy-Syakirin Fund.

Through zakat fund from Pelaburan Hartanah Berhad (PHB), 100 students received a RM500 living allowance, distributed in two ways. RM250 was credited into the recipient's account, and the other RM250 was credited into the recipient's PHB trust unit account. The aim was to ensure the stability of the student's finances and provide the opportunity for the recipient to invest financial instruments to receive a return in the future.

A total of 143 students each received a flood aid totalling RM500. The aid was channelled through Etiqa Family Takaful Berhad zakat fund. The aim was to lessen the burden caused by flood and help them get back on their feet.

UMT Vice Chancellor Professor Ir. Ts. Dr. Mohd Zamri Ibrahim in his speech at the ceremony reminded the aids recipients to use the money well and for the right purposes.

"May this assistance ease your way as you work towards your academic success," he said. "And do not forget to give back to the community one day."



The recipients said they were deeply touched by UMT's kind gesture, which demonstrates the university always prioritizes its students' welfare.

They said the money will help ease their burden and allow them to have a better life as students.

They expressed their appreciation by thanking the contributors to the aids and wishing that their businesses will continue to prosper.

UMT Hosts International Tamil Debate Championship, Tamil Youth Conference

Suriaty Khalid, Cultural and Art Centre; Hegabisek Kumar A/L Rajan, Faculty of Science and Marine Environment

Participants from Singapore, India, and Sri Lanka gathered at UMT in January when the university became host to the 7th International Tamil Debate Championship.

For this year's competition, the selection rounds were hosted in each participating country. For Malaysia, the selection round took place at UMT, and for Singapore, the screening was done at the Umar Pulavar Tamil Language Centre. For India and Sri Lanka, the selection rounds were conducted online.

The top eight teams from an initial pool 40 progressed to the final round, held at UMT's Sultan Mizan Hall.

To ensure the event's success, UMT collaborated with seven key organizations, including the Malaysian Indian Youth Council (Terengganu), Singapore Tamil Society, the Tamil Representative Council of Singapore, and Sri Lanka's Tamil Debaters Council. Additionally, 16 higher education institutions from both Malaysia and abroad took part in the event.

For the first time, the International Tamil Youth Conference was also held in conjunction with the debate competition. The conference included keynote speeches, scholarly paper presentations, and panel discussions involving representatives from Malaysia, Indonesia, Sri Lanka, India, and Singapore. Drawing 300 participants from across the globe, the conference was a resounding success.

The event was officiated by Tuan Haji Asmadi, Director General of the Terengganu Youth and Sports Department, who emphasized the importance of fostering global collaboration among Tamil youth. He highlighted how such initiatives strengthen intellectual and cultural ties while positioning Terengganu as a hub for international youth engagement. The conference's theme, Revolutionary Voices of Tamil Youth, encouraged participants to take an active role in shaping their communities and driving social change.

The championship concluded with India's team emerging victorious, followed by Sri Lanka in second place and another Indian team securing third place.

With a year of meticulous planning leading to its successful execution, the 7th International Tamil Debate Championship and Youth Conference at UMT set a new benchmark for future editions, paving the way for continued engagement and empowerment of Tamil-speaking youth worldwide.

Seeing such success, Sajishnavan, President of Sri Lanka's Tamil Debaters Council, offered to collaborate with UMT to further elevate the debate competition.

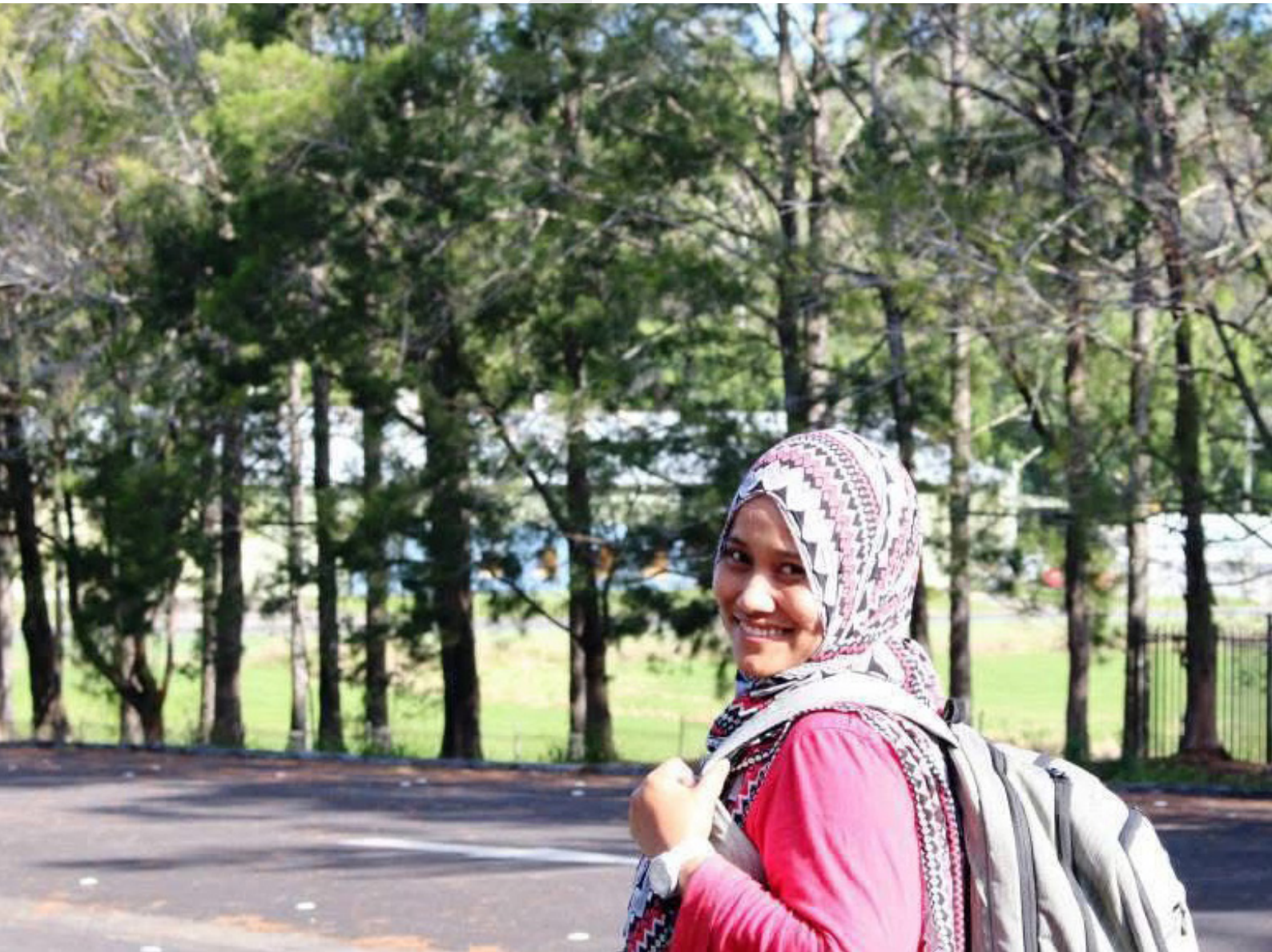
The occasion was considered special since it was the first time the competition was physically held after being conducted virtually in previous years.

The two-day event was organized by the Baratham Cultural Club, whose members are UMT students of Indian ethnicity.

Since its inception in 2018, the Tamil Debate Championship has seen active participation from several countries, including Singapore, India, Sri Lanka, as well as Malaysia.

The competition aims to empower young Tamil speakers by providing a platform to articulate their ideas while fostering the continued use and appreciation of the Tamil language.





Dr. Roslizawati Ab Lah joined Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT) as tutor in 2006 before becoming a permanent lecturer in 2017. She received her bachelor's degree in fisheries from UMT, her master's degree in fish biology and management from University of Bergen, Norway, and her PhD in marine science from Southern Cross University, Australia.

She is a marine ecology expert who studies about the effects of climate change on the nutritional properties and biological quality of marine species, particularly molluscs. Her research focuses on the nutritional value of marine species for human consumption, the impact of ocean warming and acidification towards the nutritional properties of molluscs, and molluscs' heat tolerance in areas exposed to global warming.

In her studies involving turban snails, she has investigated the effects of ocean warming and acidification on the nutritional quality of marine gastropod molluscs in the superfamily Trochoidea considered important in the fishing industry, as well as the heat tolerance levels and temperature preferences of this species in areas exposed to global warming. This line of research has demonstrated how climate change has forced this species to migrate to more suitable areas, thus impacting fisheries resource management. In addition, she also conducts research on molluscs' biodiversity and its relationship with their breeding cycle and quality.

As an academic at UMT, Dr. Roslizawati has been making significant contributions towards marine ecosystem research and marine resource management. On top of that, she has been offering guidance to students involved in research projects examining the impact of climate change on molluscs.

Dr. Roslizawati Ab Lah
Faculty of Fisheries and Food Science
Universiti Malaysia Terengganu
email : ros_ablah@umat.edu.my



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Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (UMT)
21030 Kuala Nerus, Terengganu Darul Iman, Malaysia
Website : www.umt.edu.my
Email : pro@umt.edu.my
Facebook : Universiti Malaysia Terengganu Official

International Centre
Tel : +09-6685183
Fax : +09-6684325

Centre for Academic and Quality
Tel : +09-6684335
Fax : +09-6684143

