



# WHERE THE SKY MEETS THE SEA

A sandbar about eight nautical miles off the coast of Selangor is the state's and quite likely the country's latest tourist hot spot



Evening visits to the Sky Mirror are rare, occurring once or twice a month. The 30-minute boat ride may be hairy at that time of the day, but the reward is a spectacular sunset.

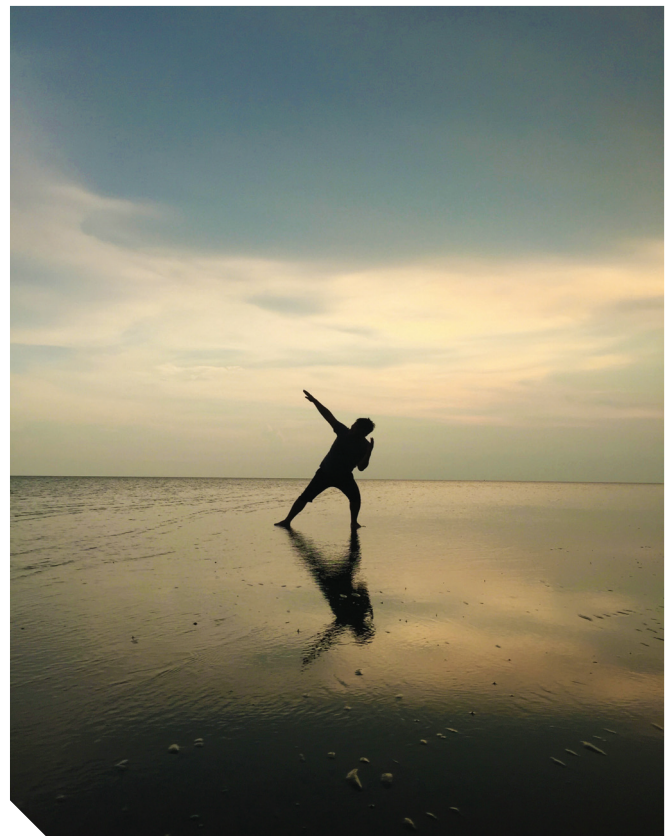
It has been dubbed Malaysia's version of Bolivia's famous salt flats, Salar de Uyuni, for the mirror-effect that it offers. It is certainly a sight to behold and if you are lucky enough, the sandbar can stretch to the size of more than a hundred football fields. Here, with only the sea and the occasional fishing boat or container vessel in the distance, it is difficult to wrap your head around the fact that you are actually standing on a seabed in the Straits of Malacca.

That it is accessible only on certain days of the month has not put off the Instagram and social-media-loving traveller. By the dozens, they alight from boats — operated by tour companies and fishermen from Kuala Selangor and nearby villages, all wanting a slice of the tourist dollar — and begin taking photos.

The dab, jumping and yoga poses and a whole gamut of styles and actions make for memorable snaps.

But the large numbers of visitors that are descending on this sandbar are also having an effect on the habitat here. The seabed is home to a variety of snails — tiger moon, oval moon, clear sundial — as well as other creatures such as mangrove anemones, flower moon crabs and hermit crabs.

In the few years that people have begun to visit this sandbar, concerned locals point out that the populations of these animals are retreating, either having been trampled on or worse, taken away as souvenirs. What is equally distressing is the rubbish that is left behind by visitors — sand-soaked clothes, umbrellas used as props for photos and even cigarette packs are just some of the things discarded by cam-whoring visitors. The Sky Mirror, it would appear, is slowly being loved to death.



Even the most reserved person will strike a pose when they visit this sandbar

PLACES & LANDMARKS



The 'beach' at Sky Mirror is teeming with life, including (clockwise from top left) hermit crabs, spotted moon crabs and sea anemones



Lee Seng Huat, a fisherman of more than four decades, was one of the first people to have discovered the sandbar in the Straits of Malacca. It was later popularised by tour operators as the Sky Mirror. Fishermen, from many decades back, he says, have known about the sandbar in order to avoid stranding their boats on it.



If you are visiting the Sky Mirror with Steve Lee of Wave Rest House & Café, forget about making a beeline for photos. He will instead give you an insight into the ecosystem here and introduce you to the animals that call the seabed home, only *then* can you start posing. 🌊

**Text & photos by Sreerema Banoo/Fun Life/Huijia Voyage**