

THE villagers of Ba' medamot together with Len and his entourage of forestry staff.



The completed suspension bridge at Ba' Medamot

# A bridge in Ulu Baram

BARAM: A 32-metre long suspension bridge across the ties living outside the national Forest Department, under Foundation is made up of ing their children to schools Sungai Kubaan was recently park, and Kelabits and tourists the ITTO supported project, people who were privileged to provided by the government. completed and declared open from overseas. Pulong Tau National Park, has be born and raised in a coun- A fine example is that by Datuk Len Talif Salleh, The upgrading work been helping the Penan comtry with modern facilities and of Damaris Panai, a Penan Acting Permanent Secretary, involved widening of certain munities living in the vicinity amenities. They have a main of Long Kevok. Due to her Ministry of Planning and dangerous sections of the trail of the Park for the past two agenda of raising funds for the good results in the SPM, she Resource Management and and replacing timber bridges years. benefits their organisation. received the Chief Minister's Director of Forests, on Dec across small streams. Among the assistance ren- Based on his experiences, Special Award and was award- 17.

In his speech, Len empha- dered were providing grav- Len considers education as a full scholarship by the watershed of the north-west- bol of cooperation between other basic amenities to Longin life and urged the Penans to studies in accounting. ern boundary of the Pulong the government, ITTO, the Lobang and Long Sabai, pro- Tau National Park in the Ulu timber industry and the local viding training in fruit and Baram. communities. vegetable planting to six

The bridge was constructed Recently, at the instigation Penan villages, including the under the community devel- of foreign NGOs who have supply of planting materials opment programme of the no real intention to help, 17 and tools and assisting 230 Pulong Tau National Park so-called Penan communi- applicants from the Penan project that is supported by ties declared over 160,000 and other communities to the International Tropical hectares of forests in the Ulu apply for their birth certifi- Timber Organisation (ITTO) Baram as Penan Peace Park. cates and MyKads. and implemented by Forest In actual fact, it was only Shoes, exercise books and Department Sarawak as the a small fraction of Penans pencils, tooth brush and soap project's Executing Agency. who were being manipulated have also been provided to

The project's main objec- by the foreign NGOs to gain the Penan students studying tives are biodiversity conser- sympathy in their respective in Bario. vation and community-based countries to raise funds. The department will con- development. Sadly, none of the money tinue to do whatever it can

Samling Strategic raised have been utilised in the coming years to assist Corporation in Miri helped to uplift the living standard the Penan community and in to transport the steel cables of the Penan or to provide the pipeline are projects such cement and all other materi- infrastructure facilities which as extending the gravity feed als as well as personnel to the could benefit them and other water supply to Ba' Medamot construction site. communities in the area. and providing building mate-

Members of the construc- In fact, these same NGOs rials for their houses. tion team comprised forestry groups, especially the so-called A native himself, Len in his staff from headquarters in Bruno Manser Foundation is a early years had the experience Kuching, and regional offices traitor to the Penan communi- of roaming the jungle and col- in Miri, Sibul, Limbang, Bario, ty by denying them the option lecting jungle produce for a Lawas and Ba' kelalan and of being able to live a progres- livelihood. Thus, he can relate seven Penans from the villages ive life similar to other com- to the challenges faced by the of Ba' Medamot. munities in the state. Penans in their daily lives.

Another activity imple- They have done nothing to However, education pro- mented at the same time was help the Penan community vided by the government the upgrading of the 12-km except to oppose any devel- (he graduated with a BSc in long jungle trail from Bario to opment that would benefit Forestry) made him to what Ba' Medamot - a trail regularly them. he is today.



Datuk Len Talif Salleh and Raja Libak, headman of Ba' Medamot, at the new bridge.