

A sight seen once in a blue moon

Skywatchers thrilled to witness rare lunar event

GEORGE TOWN: The last time a celestial triplet happened was 152 years ago – making the viewing a once-in-a-lifetime event for hundreds of visitors in Karpal Singh Drive here.

Despite a drizzle, many were drawn to the novelty of observing the three-in-one lunar event of the blue moon, supermoon and lunar eclipse which started in the evening.

Lim Eng Chin, 23, was thrilled to catch the sight using telescopes of various sizes after the sky cleared.

“I must see this phenomenon this time because the next one will come along more than a century later.

“I’ve had an informative evening as I learned where the idiom ‘once in a blue moon’ came from,” he said yesterday during a public observation by the Astronomical Society of Penang which provided the public with 16 telescopes..

Society president Dr Chong Hon Yew said the last time such an event happened was in 1866.

According to him, the blue moon refers to the second full moon which occurs in a month, a supermoon is when the moon appears larger than usual due to its close proximity to the Earth and a blood moon occurs during the lunar eclipse.

In **Petaling Jaya**, rain and thick clouds hovering above prevented stargazers and astrophotography

enthusiasts from witnessing the rare celestial display last night.

There was no sight of the moon when it rose at 7.17pm.

The horizon, with the background of the Titiwangsa main range, which is visible from tall buildings in the city and Selangor, was covered with thick clouds.

There was still no sight of the moon when the lunar eclipse began at 7.51pm. The eclipse ended at 10.07pm.

In **Kuala Terengganu**, crowds took the opportunity to witness the rare lunar eclipse at the Tok Jembal beach.

Low light pollution at the beach allowed them to see it with the naked eye.

“It’s my first time seeing something like this. Luckily, the clouds cleared,” said Perak native Surinadila Abd Latif.

The 33-year-old technical executive was on holiday in Terengganu with her friend Hasila Mohd Amin.

“We didn’t want to miss the chance to see this,” said Hasila, a school administrator.

The East Coast Environmental Research Institute from Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin also provided telescopes and binoculars to those who wished to take a closer look.

A solat sunat was performed in conjunction with the celestial phenomenon.