

PUBLIC TALK

*Raffles Museum of Biodiversity Research,
Department of Biological Sciences, NUS*

Dr Kassim Moosa

Indonesian Institute of Science

"The Search for the Indonesian Coelacanth" - a living fossil extraordinaire

This talk will include video footage of the search for the fish's natural habitat in Indonesia. Dr Kasim Moosa will share his experiences of the fish with the audience; including its momentous find, the challenges to conserve it; as well as the scientific scandals associated with the fish and its discoveries.

The coelacanth is a 360 million year old species which was long thought extinct. In 1938, the world was electrified with the news that a living fossil was found in South Africa! In 1997, the world was once again amazed - biologists stumbled onto the fish at a fishmarket in Sulawesi! A long search followed and a live Indonesian coelacanth was eventually caught a year later. The discovery was announced to the world in the prestigious journal NATURE to a lot of fanfare. But a rogue researcher, obtained the animal's DNA without authorisation and quickly named the species *Latimeria menadoensis*. This scandalous behaviour caused a furore and is still talked about! Nevertheless, Kasim Moosa and discoverer Mark Erdmann have actively campaigned for the fish's protection and conservation, and even managed to locate the living fossil in its natural habitat in North Sulawesi, finding two living specimens in the cave 145m deep. It's a dinosaur encounter!



All are welcome

About the speaker

Dr. Mohammad Kasim Moosa graduated from the National University of Indonesia, Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Sorbonne, Paris (1979) and Université Pierre et Marie Curie, Paris in 1983. He worked at the Centre for Oceanography Research of the Indonesian Institute of Science from 1963 to 2002, and was reappointed in 2003. Dr. Moosa has published some 75 scientific papers on mainly decapods and stomatopods and was co-author to the paper that published the spectacular finding of the Indonesian Coelacanth.

Date: 4 Oct 2003, Sat
Time: 2.30 - 4 pm
Venue: Lecture Theatre 31 (Science Auditorium) Blk S16 Level 3, Faculty of Science, NUS, Science Drive 1
Host: A/P Peter K L Ng (Director, NUS Raffles Museum of Biodiversity Research)

Visitors may park at Carpark 10