

Singapore hunts stray dogs at new tourist attraction

SINGAPORE: Feral dogs have invaded a brand-new US\$790mil (RM2.5bil) botanical attraction in Singapore and attacked a visitor, forcing authorities to step up a hunt for the strays around the sprawling complex.

Park officials said a 22-year-old local woman was wounded in a dog attack at the 101ha Gardens by the

Bay, which opened late last month and has since been visited by more than 200,000 people.

Stray animals are a rare sight in Singapore, which is known for its obsession with cleanliness and order, but the gardens are surrounded by construction sites where roving dogs are believed to have taken refuge.

"Public safety is our top priority," a spokesman for the park said yesterday, confirming that operations to round up the strays had been stepped up following the dog attack on Monday.

Local media reported that three dogs were involved in the incident.

The government's Agri-Food and Veterinary Authority (AVA) con-

firmed that stray dogs had been spotted by the public in the area before the gardens opened, and that it had caught eight strays so far and put down six of them.

"We will continue our surveillance in the area," it said in a statement.

The Gardens by the Bay include two enormous conservatories, arti-

ficial waterfalls and 18 man-made "supertrees" up to 50m high, in a lush tropical setting.

The problem with the stray dogs surfaced after a controversy over what to do with an explosion of wild boar that have strayed out of a nature reserve, with some calling for a cull and others wanting them to be protected. — AFP