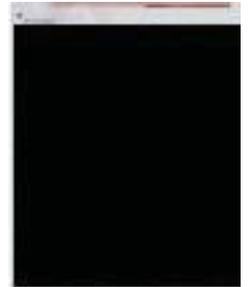


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PLANT A TREE AND TRACK IT

SERIAN: The public is encouraged to participate in the government's ongoing effort to plant 100 million trees and use the 'Penhijauan Malaysia' application to track each tree planted.

Towards this end the Department of Environment (DoE) has launched the 1RAS 1Pokok (1 environmental partner, 1 tree) campaign as the signature event for the Sarawak Earth Day celebration this year.

1RAS 1Pokok simply means that the campaign advises each individual to plant at least one tree.

The programme is a joint effort by several government agencies including the Sarawak Energy Berhad (SEB), UNIMAS, Serian Resident Office as well as the Department of Agriculture Sarawak.

The government agencies were also joined by more than 20 scholars from Universiti Malaysia Sarawak (UNIMAS) to implement the greening programme at the Sarawak Earth Day 2022 held at Lubok Ria Integrated Agricultural Development Area (I.A.D.A) on Saturday (March 19).

Forest Department Sarawak (FDS) deputy director Jack Liam urged the people of Sarawak to do their bit.

"For this programme, our department has contributed forest saplings as part of our continuous commitment to achieve the target.

"It is a universal responsibility to address climate change, global warming and more.

"This (the campaign) is an effort to restock trees in our country especially in this state as Sarawak supposedly the home to thousands of flora and fauna," he said to New Sarawak Tribune at the launching ceremony of 1RAS 1Pokok campaign.

He also said that this effort could be done in many ways including planting a tree at one's backyard.

FDS assistant director Azahari Omar gave an insight on the Penhijauan Malaysia application by the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources, abbreviated KeTSA.

"Penhijauan Malaysia is an application that allows users to participate in the 100 million tree planting campaign in Malaysia.

"For every tree that you plant, you can record it through this app by uploading the picture of



UNIMAS students and SEB staff who join the campaign.

the plant.

"Some other details are also required including the location of your planted tree, when it was planted, the tree type as well as your name.

"Anyone can use the application. Your planted tree won't be counted as part of the campaign if it is not in the record," said Azahari.

Fathudin Mohd Abas of the Department of Environment (DoE) stressed that the 100 million tree-planting campaign would benefit the future generations.

"We are well aware that our country is now rapidly developing. Many forest areas have been explored.

"So, this effort can, to some extent, help in creating nature for future generations to enjoy.

"If possible, all communities should take this opportunity to plant trees as well. In terms of science, we know that trees produce oxygen for us. So, please take this opportunity to face the environmental challenges affecting our Mother Earth," he said.

His colleague, Sarah Darewis said the campaign would benefit locals in the future as there were also fruit trees planted.

"Indirectly, the number of trees will increase and the area can be used as a research field for students majoring in plant science and other related fields,

she said.

As for SEB, it plans to plant and/or protect 500,000 trees within 10 years from 2021 to 2030.

"The tree planting and protection areas include water catchment and mining areas as well as urban areas.

"This year alone, our key performance indicator (KPI) is to plant and/or protect 50,000 trees.

"We organise environmental awareness programmes throughout the years for employees, government agencies, contractors, schools and the general public to enhance environmental stewardship," said the SEB senior vice president of health, safety, security and environment (HSSE) Marconi Madai.

SEB believes that everyone can contribute and work together towards greening the earth and adopting a healthy lifestyle.

"We also intend to take the lead in environmental conservation efforts," he added.

While others may plant a single tree each, a staff of SEB said she had planted more.

"Some planted four plants, I have planted seven! "I hope my tress will grow well to benefit the future generation," she added.

Meanwhile, students from the Faculty of Resource Science

and Technology (FRST) of UNIMAS are also involved in the campaign.

A final year student, Selvana Eyra Felix said this programme gave her the opportunity to experience such activity.

"We have been locked down for quite a long time and we haven't been able to undergo physical study for some period.

"Since enrolling at the college last week, I have been looking forward to joining such event," she said.

Her colleague, Magdalena Stephen said this programme would help them to realise the importance of tree planting as well as expose them to current issues relating to forests.

"I would like to advise all communities to work together to protect the environment and not depend on the government alone.

"As a whole, we need to strive

together for a better future.

"One tree for each person is enough to restore the forest in Sarawak," she said.

Kicked off in January 2021, the 100 million tree-planting campaign aims to see 100 million trees planted across the country by 2025.

The Sarawak government itself has targeted 35 million trees to plant over five years.



PARTICIPANTS are planting tree in conjunction with the Sarawak Earth Day celebration

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FRIM optimistic of expanding forestry expertise globally

KUALA LUMPUR: In line with its establishment over 90 years ago, the Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) remains optimistic about providing the best input through research and development (R&D) in the sustainable management of forest resources in the country.

Its director-general Dr Ismail Parlan said FRIM would continue to expand its expertise at the global level, especially in tropical countries, by offering appropriate services through collaborative partnership with those countries.

"The tropical countries have almost the same climate as Malaysia. The areas of expertise offered by FRIM include forest biotechnology, herbal processing, furniture testing, and forest carbon stock calculations.

"FRIM plans to include training invitations in those fields to foreign agencies this year," he told Bernama in an exclusive interview at his office in Kepong in conjunction with the International Day of Forests 2022 celebration.

"FRIM holds the chair of the Asia Pacific Association of Forestry Research Institutions (APAFRI) for the 2021-2024 term. We will use the APAFRI platform to promote our services at the international stage. With such programmes, we can assist tropical countries that still need services and relevant expertise," he added.

Meanwhile, in conjunction with this year's International Day of Forests, Ismail said the national-level celebration would be held at Tanum Forest Reserve, Kuala Lipis, Pahang on March 26, organised by the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources together with Forestry Department Peninsular Malaysia.

FRIM will organise 51 types of tree species planting activities in line with the celebration.

The United Nations General Assembly proclaimed March 21 as the International Day of Forests (IDF) in 2012 to celebrate and raise awareness of the importance of all types of forests.

According to Ismail, the community should appreciate the role of forests, namely, in economic development, such as the timber industry, environmental stability, climate change control, water supply as well as socio-economic and cultural development.

"Malaysia is committed to maintaining at least 50 per cent of its land area under forest cover (to honour its pledge made

during the Rio Earth Summit in Brazil in 1992). Malaysia's forest cover is currently at 55.3 per cent or 18.3 million hectares of our total land area.

"This shows our commitment to conserve the forest area under the Malaysian Forestry Policy, launched on March 21 last year," he added.

The forestry sector is crucial to the country's economic development. The timber industry, for example, provides over 300,000 job opportunities and contributes an export value of over RM22 billion, said Ismail.

In line with this year's celebration theme 'Forests and sustainable production and consumption', he said FRIM is always committed to carrying out various research to assist and improve sustainable forest management (SFM), among others, the optimum use of forest resources, such as efficient use of wood resources for furniture.

"The studies conducted by FRIM to ensure the forestry aspects are well taken care of are through the rehabilitation of degraded forest areas with appropriate species and techniques.

"In the 100-million tree planting campaign, FRIM leads one of the campaign committees, which is the Tree Planting Technical Committee," he said, adding that some 27.7 million trees had been planted by various parties nationwide since the campaign was launched on Jan 5, 2021.

FRIM also conducts socio-economic research and strategic analysis on forestry and environmental issues for national development, said Ismail.

He also expressed the hope that the community would take care of the forest by avoiding vandalism when entering the recreational forests or encroachment of forest land.

"The community should be aware of the importance of forests, conservation for the well-being and stability of the environment," he said, adding that many benefits could be obtained through forest products, and FRIM had been listed as one of the top-10 destinations to be visited in Selangor.

Commenting on the reopening of the country's borders on April 1, he said FRIM is expecting an increase of visitors from Japan, Australia, and European countries.

— BERNAMA