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Dinding Schist is a coarse grained metamorphic formation comprising different types of rocks with an estimated thickness of 3,000m. – **BERNAMAPIC**



# Geological gem in heart of city

➤ Experts call for preservation of Bukit Dinding due to presence of unique rocks, estimated to be some 480 million years old

**KUALA LUMPUR:** Bukit Dinding in Wangsa Maju here is among the remaining green lungs of the bustling capital city and a popular destination for hiking, jogging and cycling.

However, few are aware that this 291m hill is also rich in geological treasures.

Studies have revealed the schist rocks found on the hill - known as Dinding Schist - are estimated to be 479 million years old, among the oldest in Peninsular Malaysia and predating its limestone formations.

University of Nottingham Malaysia Chemical and Environmental Engineering Department former lecturer Assoc Prof Dr Mustafa Kamal Abdul Aziz, who has researched Dinding Schist, said it is a coarse grained metamorphic rock composed of different types of rocks, characterised by several discontinuous structures with an estimated thickness of 3,000m.

He believes Bukit Dinding, due to its geological richness, has great potential to become an important site for scientific research as its Dinding Schist rocks are recognised by geologists as some of the best samples available in the country.

"Further research can be carried out to explore the relationship between the Dinding Schist rocks and surface structures, as well as their impact on uncontrolled development and other natural hazards such as floods and landslides.

"In addition, studies could also focus on how Bukit Dinding can be managed as a natural defence to mitigate the effects of climate change, such as heavy rainfall, prolonged drought and forest fires," he said recently.

Mustafa Kamal also suggested Bukit Dinding be designated as a national geopark to preserve its ecological treasures.

"If some of the Dinding Schist found in Melawati and Ukay Perdana has resulted in the area's elevation to geopark status (Gombak-Hulu Langat Geopark, Selangor), why is the Dinding Schist in Bukit Dinding being overlooked, especially since this area has the best (schist) samples in terms of age and origin?"

"In fact, the Bukit Dinding schist is still well-preserved compared with that of Ukay Perdana and Melawati, where most of the rock outcrops have been destroyed due to development."

Universiti Malaya Department of Geology senior lecturer Dr Elanni Md Affandi said there is a possibility the Dinding Schist rocks are at risk of weathering due to interaction with various environmental agents such as rainwater, temperature changes and wind, leading to its eventual breakdown into soil.

"And when development occurs, forest trees that hold the soil structure are cut down and cleared, and the natural drainage system is also altered. As a result, during prolonged heavy rain, the infiltration of water into the slopes increases the soil water saturation, weakening its condition.

"When this happens, the schist rocks are exposed to environmental agents that can lead to landslides and mudslides," she said, adding that field surveys and satellite images have shown about seven small and large landslides occurred in 2021 at Bukit Dinding.

Malaysian Nature Society (MNS) botanist Lim Koon Hup said the biodiversity at Bukit Dinding forest can be improved if steps are taken to turn the area into a natural forest, Bernama reported.

"For example, Taman Rimba Kiara (in Taman Tun Dr Ismail) was once a rubber plantation but now it has a thriving biodiversity following its transformation into a green park by the government. Similarly, the Forest Research Institute Malaysia in Kepong, which was once an abandoned mining area, has undergone a remarkable transformation through reforestation."

Lim added that during a two-day field survey in Bukit Dinding, he recorded a total of 175 samples of forest tree species and he expects this number to increase with more research done in the area.