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Celebrating 40 years leadership in tropical forestry research

KUALA LUMPUR: As it approaches its 40th anniversary this October, the Forest Research Institute Malaysia (Frim) remains committed to spearheading tropical forestry research and innovation based on natural resources.

Its director-general Datuk Dr Ismail Parlan said this year's anniversary is not only a celebration of past achievements but also a symbol of Frim's resolve to move forward with a global vision and aspirations for environmental sustainability.

"Frim hopes to gain the support of all Malaysians in achieving Unesco World Heritage Site status, for the sake of future generations and the preservation of nature.

"This 40th anniversary reflects Frim's illustrious legacy and its future direction as a credible, sustainable, and internationally recognised institution," he told Bernama.

Ismail said a series of activities will be held throughout the year from March to December, with the main celebration scheduled for Oct 4 at Frim's premises on Jalan Jelutong in Kepong.

"This celebration aims to highlight Frim's contributions to the nation and the environment, raise awareness on the importance of biodiversity conservation, and strengthen Frim's brand as a global research institution.

"The year-long programme includes biodiversity talks on wild orchids, the Frim Merdeka Run in August, and the 100-Year Heritage Site Celebration in December. On the main day, the public, students, researchers, and non-governmental

organisations (NGOs) will be invited to attend pocket talks, trail tours, exhibitions, and the presentation of the Unesco's plaque," he said.

He noted that the institute, formerly known as the Forest Research Institute (FRI) established in 1926 and renamed Frim on Oct 1, 1985, has received various accolades and awards in recognition of its contributions to research, development, commercialisation, and innovation.

"Our most prestigious honour was the Mahathir Science Award in 2009, in recognition of our contributions to research and development in Malaysia's rubber industry. We also received the Unesco Sultan Qaboos Prize on Nov 17, 2021, at the 41st Unesco General Conference in Paris.

"That award recognised Frim's initiatives in monitoring and conserving threatened species crucial to the country, publishing materials such as the Malaysia Red List: Plants of Peninsular Malaysia for conservation purposes, and documenting traditional knowledge from the Orang Asli and local communities," he said.

He added that Frim is also known for various research projects, including the Documentation Project on Traditional Knowledge of Medicinal and Aromatic Plants Among the Orang Asli in Peninsular Malaysia.

"The project, which began under the Ninth Malaysia Plan in 2007, does not merely focus on documenting traditional plant uses, but also includes bioprospecting activities to verify traditional applications and identify the therapeutic potential of selected plant species," he said. – Bernama