

Headline **No apes from Sepilok and Semengoh**
Date **30 Mar 2010**
MediaTitle **Malay Mail**
Section **News**
Journalist **N/A**
Frequency **Daily**
Circ / Read **20,816 / 49,000**

Language **English**
Page No **6**
Article Size **170 cm²**
Color **Black/white**
ADValue **1,046**
PRValue **3,138**



No apes from Sepilok and Semengoh

By JOSEPH KAOS JR

KUALA LUMPUR: Primates at the East Malaysian sanctuaries of Sepilok and Semengoh will not be brought across the South China Sea to the proposed new orang utan sanctuary in Kuala Lumpur, the Tourism Ministry assures.

Recently Deputy Tourism Minister Datuk Dr James Dawos Mamit was reported to have said Sabah's Sepilok Orang Utan Sanctuary was overcrowded and some of its inhabitants would be relocated to the future sanctuary here.

"I never said such a thing," he told *The Malay Mail* at Parliament yesterday. "It's true that I said the government wants to build an ape sanctuary near KL, but never have I once mentioned Sepilok when I spoke about the new proposed sanctuary.

"Sepilok is not congested, so there is no need to transfer the apes out. You cannot simply remove the primates from their natural habitat," said James.

"It might trigger an adverse effect to the ecosystem, so it is best that Sepilok stays as it is."

The Mambong MP also ruled out taking the orang utan from the Semenggoh Wildlife Rehabilitation Centre in Kuching, Sarawak, to populate the KL sanctuary.

"Sepilok and Semengoh will be left untouched," said the MP, who is an ecological expert and the Sarawak environmental advisor.

Sabah Tourism, Culture and Environment Minister Datuk Masidi

Manjun also scoffed at reports that Sepilok was overpopulated. He was resolute that no orang utan should be removed from the sanctuary.

On the KL orang utan sanctuary proposal, Mamit said while Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak had previously mentioned interest in having a sanctuary near KL, it had yet to be ascertained where the primates would be from.

"We have not decided on this but I'm sure there are ways we can make this sanctuary a reality."

An orang utan sanctuary in close proximity to the city is expected to boost KL's tourism industry and attract visitors from the capital.

It is also in line with the government's aim to promote ecotourism, which the Tourism Ministry has entrusted to James, who was installed as its deputy minister in January.

On Friday, *The Malay Mail* reported the confirmation by Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Douglas Uggah Embas of plans for a city ape sanctuary and that a committee has been set up to carry out a feasibility study.

Speculation has been rife that the proposed location would be at the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM) in Kepong. But, Douglas had said the government is still scouting for a more suitable site as Kepong is too close to the city.

"We want a location that will be near the city so as to attract tourists but at the same time, it must be conducive and protective enough as a sanctuary for apes," said Douglas.