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Pasoh in the limelight

It houses FRIM's first research station



Thank you: FRIM DG Datuk Dr Abd Latif Mohmod (left) presenting a token of appreciation to Aziyah after the launch of the symposium as event organising chairman Dr Shamsudin Ibrahim looks on.

THE Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) recently celebrated its first research station, located in Pasoh Forest Reserve, Negri Sembilan.

Scientists who have conducted various studies at the site for over 25 years gathered to share their research findings, which have contributed significantly to the enhancement of scientific knowledge and understanding of lowland biodiversity and ecosystems.

Among the pioneer scientists at the Pasoh International Symposium, held at the institute in Kepong, were renowned ecologists – Dr Stuart Davies from Smithsonian Tropical Research Institute (STRI) and Prof Dr Toshinori Okuda of National Institute for Environmental Studies (NIES) of Japan.

The symposium, held in conjunction with the celebration of FRIM's 25th year anniversary, was launched by the Natural Resources and Environment Ministry deputy secretary-general Datuk Aziyah Mohamed.

"Malaysia has implemented the National Policy on the Environment 2002, which recognises the need for conservation of its natural heritage through research, education and public awareness, and the Pasoh Forest Reserve is

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an excellent example of such a heritage.

"Pasoh was designated as a Biosphere Reserve under the United Nations' Man and Biosphere programme in its early years given its pristine environment, potential for on-going scientific research and monitoring as well as close ties with its surrounding communities," said Aziyah.

"Through partnership with the Negri Sembilan Forestry Department, the Pasoh Forest Reserve has since gone on to become a prominent research centre."

Aziyah said FRIM's long-standing research collaborations with numerous international institutions including STRI and NIES have resulted in the publication of more than 200 scientific papers and journals specifically on Pasoh.

The forest reserve plays a key role in the study of how climate change is affecting the biodiversity of tropical forests and the various long-term studies will contribute greatly towards providing answers to some pressing issues related climate change, she added.

The Pasoh Forest Reserve, established in the early 1970s, has attracted many local and foreign scientists to conduct long-term collaborative studies, of which some are still on-going,

on biodiversity, sustainable management of tropical forests, and the role of tropical forests as carbon sinks.

Today, the Pasoh research plot, co-managed by FRIM and the Centre for Tropical Forest Science (CTFS), is part of a global network of over 40 forest research plots around the world for study of tropical and temperate forest function and diversity.

The symposium, organised with the collaboration of the Negri Sembilan Forestry Department, was attended by about 100 participants comprising researchers, graduate and post-graduate students and representatives from relevant government agencies.

Former FRIM director-general Tan Sri Dr Salleh Mohd Nor, delivered the keynote address titled, "The Spirit of Pasoh." Davies gave an overview on "Vegetation Research at Pasoh: Long-term Trends in Dynamics and Composition" while Prof Okuda talked about "Interlinkage between the biodiversity and climate changes: Towards good use of Pasoh assets."

In his presentation, Prof Okuda said the NIES scientists had learned and acquired from Pasoh knowledge of the importance of plants and animal interaction for maintenance of biodiversity, ecosystem services value and goods; and tools developed for the ecosystem management.

FRIM deputy director-general Dr Abdul Rashid Ab Malik made a presentation titled "Pasoh: Yesteryear and the way forward."

»Through partnership with the Negri Sembilan Forestry Department, the Pasoh Forest Reserve has since gone on to become a prominent research centre.«

DATUK AZIYAH MOHAMED