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FRIM area declared national heritage site

KUALA LUMPUR: Former Prime Minister Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi yesterday declared the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM) area in Kepong here as a national heritage site.

In his speech, he said the declaration gave recognition to the institute, established in 1929, as one of the world's leading tropical forest research institutes. The FRIM area can be declared an excellent model for forest rehabilitation through reforestation and regular maintenance. Evidently, after more than 80 years, the FRIM area, which was once idle land with

undergrowth, has been rehabilitated," he said. Abdullah said FRIM, guardian of the largest man-made forest in the world covering 485.2 hectares, should develop the national forestry industry so that it was not seen as concentrating only on the logging industry.

FRIM must collaborate with the Forestry Department to establish a forestry industry which does not restrict itself to issuing permits for logging but produces plants which are valuable in terms of medicine, traditional medicine and pharmaceuticals. It is hoped that FRIM will expand by opening up bigger research

institutes in every state so that we can endow our future generations with such a rain forest environment," he said.

FRIM Director-General Datuk Dr Abdul Latif Mohmod (rpt) Mohmod said polystyrene and plastic bags would be banned from the FRIM area from January next year to get visitors to appreciate the environment-friendly aspect. He also said that the entry free to the FRIM area would be raised from RM5 to RM7 and RM2 would be refunded to the visitors if they brought out with them their rubbish.-Bernama