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## Herbal venture

MARAN: The Pahang State Government with the cooperation of the Forestry Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM) will be setting up a bio-informatics unit which will have a comprehensive herbal plants data base in the country, especially in Pahang.

State Information, Science, Technology and Innovation Committee Chairman, Datuk Mohd Sharkar Shamsudin said the unit would serve as a reference centre for all biotechnology operators in and outside of the country.

He said the data base among others would contain information on plant molecules and the origing of the plants to protect national flora from being stolen for profit.

“If we do not set up this bio-informatics unit, others can take produce of our forest but claim that they originated from their own forests,” he said.

Meanwhile, the director general of FRIM, Datuk Dr Abd Latif Mohmod said the move to establish the bio-informatics unit was in line with the provision set in the Nagoya Protocol, which is an international agreement aimed at sharing fairly benefits from the usage of genetic resources.