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The heritage of Mata Ayer

UNIQUE FLORA AND FAUNA: Perlis ruler wants forest to be eco-tourism destination

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THE Forest Research Institute of Malaysia station in Mata Ayer here should be transformed into an eco-tourism site.

Raja of Perlis Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Syed Putra Jamalullail said yesterday the site was unique and significant as 121ha of its total 455ha had plants from parts of northern Peninsular Malaysia, Sabah, Thailand, Indonesia, India, Papua New Guinea and Myanmar.

He said the site should also be recognised as a heritage based on this uniqueness and significance, adding that it could help boost eco-tourism in the state.

Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin also hoped more articles could be produced, published and widely distributed to highlight the various tourist attractions in Perlis, adding that government and the private sector should also

contribute towards this effort.

The ruler was speaking at a celebration to mark World Environment Day.

Themed "Green Economy — Does it include you?", the event also saw Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin sign a Malaysia Book of Records certificate issue to FRIM for the "Largest Teak Clone Collection in Malaysia".

The Mata Ayer FRIM station has various eco-tourism attractions and facilities to offer to visitors, including a camping site which can accommodate up to 100 people, complete with a dining area, open stage and public toilets.

The station also has a 100m canopy walkway at about 7m above ground level for scientific studies and ob-

servation of flora and fauna, a teak gallery, a five-room guesthouse, a log cabin and two hostels which can accommodate some 24 guests.

Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin applauded the efforts of FRIM for having 71 cultivated varieties of teak from the best selection of local trees ready for commercialisation, making the centre the largest collection of local teak varieties in the country.

Present at the event were Raja Muda of Perlis Tuanku Syed Faizuddin Putra Jamalullail, Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Md Isa Sabu, Deputy National Resources and Environment Minister Tan Sri Joseph Kurup and FRIM director-general Prof Datuk Dr Abdul Latif Mohmod.

In December last year, when Deputy Tourism Minister Datuk Dr James Dawos Mamit visited the centre, he had said Perlis had the potential to become an eco-tourism hub.

"Highlight the various tourist attractions in Perlis."

**Tuanku Syed
Sirajuddin Syed
Putra Jamalullail**
Raja of Perlis