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Frim against proposal to turn 515-hectare forest into highway

KUALA LUMPUR: The Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM) will continue to protest against a proposal to turn a 515-hectare forest under its jurisdiction and located on the fringe of the national capital, into a highway.

Its director-general, Datuk Dr Abdul Latif Mohmod, said a proposal to build a highway across the forest was mooted in February last year, and was raised again recently.

However, he declined to comment on the parties involved in the proposal.

He said the issue died down when 99 per cent of the FRIM staff signed a petition of protest in March last year, after the proposal was raised.

"However, we were informed the parties concerned again made the proposal for the highway project, and FRIM will hold a meeting to discuss the issue on Tuesday," he told reporters after attending a ceremony in appreciation of the media at Dataran FRIM here yesterday.

Meanwhile, in his speech, Abdul Latif said the mass media should play an important role to boost awareness on environment conservation so that society would not be blamed by the coming generations for failure to inherit the biodiversity.

"A five-year inventory carried out by Frim, beginning 2008, on 1,132 tree species in the peninsula found four were critically threatened.

"Likewise, the insect species like the horned beetle, which were numerous in the past in coconut trees, are now being threatened because they are being sold abroad at US\$100 each, to be turned into decorative items," he said.

At the same function, Abdul Latiff also handed over certificates of appreciation to 10 selected media practitioners over their writings on environmental issues.

Three Bernama journalists who were among the recipients were domestic news service deputy news editor Ahmad Fuad Yahya, features and current issues journalist Wan Khairul Sahara Ahmad Ghazali and Radio24 managing editor Mohamad Letfee Ahmad. – Bernama