

Headline	FRIM comes under threat		
MediaTitle	Sunday Star		
Date	02 Mar 2014	Color	Full Color
Section	Nation	Circulation	320,964
Page No	12	Readership	1,072,000
Language	English	ArticleSize	258 cm ²
Journalist	N/A	AdValue	RM 12,015
Frequency	Weekly	PR Value	RM 36,045



FRIM comes under threat

Highway proposal a danger to world's oldest man-made tropical forest

KUALA LUMPUR: The Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM), the largest and oldest man-made tropical forest in the world, is under threat by a proposal to build an elevated highway across it.

Its director-general Datuk Dr Abd Latif Mohmod said he "would fight to the end" against such a move, which would be detrimental for the many endangered plant species within its grounds.

"If this buffer zone for endangered plant species is damaged, where else can we keep them?"

"FRIM is a national and natural heritage and any threat to it must be fought," he told reporters after a media appreciation ceremony here yesterday.

Dr Abd Latif said the issue first arose when he was approached by a group, whom he declined to name, in February last year, suggesting that FRIM be "split in half" for the highway's construction.

He said that this could be because FRIM, which spans 544.3ha, was under a single ownership after receiving its freehold land title from the Selangor Government in 2007,

making it easier for negotiations.

"But they forget that FRIM is now under Selangor and not Kuala Lumpur. Selangor is a state that does not allow logging because it depends on business and commercial activities (for income)," he said.

Dr Abd Latif said they had assumed the proposal was set aside after FRIM handed the group a petition which showed that 99% of its personnel were against the plan.

However, he said he was informed earlier this week that the proposal had now been brought to the "higher authorities".

Dr Abd Latif also thanked the media for constantly providing public awareness on environmental issues as well as highlighting FRIM's work.

"Many of the awards we have received are mainly due to the media exposure given to us.

"The value and impact of your reports have helped FRIM maintain our position as a tropical forest research institute that is known worldwide," he said.

Among the media recognised by FRIM were *The Star* journalists Tan Cheng Li and Isabelle Lai for their respective reports last year on Merapoh, Pahang, and Gunung Kanthan, Perak, as well as the *StarMetro* section for its support for FRIM's activities.

FRIM's Kepong campus, which is renowned as a model of successful reforestation, was established in the 1920s and recognised as a natural heritage in 2009 as well as a national heritage in 2011.

It is working to attain Unesco World Heritage status by 2017.



Promoting awareness: Dr Abd Latif (centre) with *The Star* journalists Steven Patrick (left), who accepted a certificate of recognition on behalf of *StarMetro*, and Lai (right).