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Lotus blooms again in Tasik Chini

After flood, flowers now in the pink of health, thanks to Frim

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PEKAN: The iconic lotus plants of Tasik Chini, most of which died out during the massive floods last year, are blooming again thanks to rehabilitation efforts carried out by the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (Frim) and the Forestry Department.

Pahang Forestry Department director Datuk Mohd Paiz Kamaruzaman said several projects to restore the biodiversity of the lake had been implemented under the 10th Malaysia Plan, among which was the replanting of the *Nelumbo nucifera* lotus.

"The main draw of the lake is the lotus plants but it was severely affected by the heavy water flow from Sungai Pahang during the floods late last year.

The plants cannot survive being

submerged for a very long time and that is why we are replanting the lotus," he said after launching a workshop on the preparation of land and aquatic plant stocks for the replanting of the Tasik Chini basin here yesterday.

Mohd Paiz said although the floods destroyed most of the lotus plants, there was a silver lining to it because the invasive "ekor kucing" (*Cabomba furcata*) plants in the lake had also been reduced drastically.

Frim Geoinformation Programme head Dr Abd Rahman Kassim said among the workshop's objectives was to provide training for staff to re-introduce the lotus fast.

"To encourage the growth of the lotus plants, this project has developed the proper methods to prepare stocks and a more effective replanting system to ensure a higher survivability of



Lots of lotuses: Mohd Paiz (in blue shirt) looking at the replanted flowers with other participants of the workshop.

the plants," he said.

Frim ecohydrologist Mohd Ghazali Hasan explained that the method of rehabilitation was to transplant lotus plants from other areas to the lake.

"For example, we can harvest lotus shoots from the Sekinchan

paddy fields and within two months of being placed in a nursery, it will have grown anew.

"We can then move it to Tasik Chini," he said.

The workshop was attended by 70 participants comprising members of the local communities

and representatives from government agencies.

The three-day workshop covered various other subjects such as the mapping of degraded forest areas in the lake basin and soil survey as well as the replanting of trees and bamboos.