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A greening tradition

Company plants 13,000 trees around its new mall in Klebang



story by
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ABOUT 13,000 trees of various species were planted at the premises of Aeon Mall Klebang in conjunction with its pre-opening ceremony recently.

The mall is expected to open its doors to the public on Oct 21.

Trees like *Gaharu*, *Katong Laut*, *Kenanga*, *Cengal*, *Sepetir Daun Lebai* as well as local fruit trees and herbal plants were planted around the mall.

Aeon Co (M) Bhd managing director Nur Qamarina Chew said tree planting has long been the brand's commitment towards helping preserve Mother Earth.

She said the company prioritises the need to sustain a greener tomorrow and create awareness on embracing nature.

She added that to plant a tree is to help nurture a future and it is often said that planting a tree can enable a person to gather strength from one's inner roots.

Nur Qamarina said the "Aeon Hometown Forest Program" was launched in 1991, where the first tree planting initiative was carried out at Aeon Malacca Shopping Centre (now known as Aeon Mall Melaka),

with 50,000 trees planted.

"Since then, this treasured tradition continues to grow where with every opening of Aeon store or mall, trees are planted.

"To date, the Japanese retailer has planted more than half a million saplings throughout the country and worldwide, the company has planted 10 million trees.

"Over at Aeon Klebang, more than 13,000 trees and shrubs have been planted and I wish to say a big thank you to our commendable team of 800 volunteers," she said before the tree planting ceremony at the Educational Forest Area last Saturday.

Nur Qamarina said the simple act of tree planting represents an opportunity for the retailer to bond with the local community

and grow a greener and healthier environment for the generations to come.

The guest-of-honour at the event was Forest Research Institute of Malaysia's director-general Datuk Dr Abd Latif Mohmod.

Also present was Aeon Co (M) Bhd's chairman Datuk Abdullah Mohd Yusof.

The volunteers comprised nature enthusiasts, environmentalists, local community members, government officials, the mall's business partners, schoolchildren as well as personnel from the Fire and Rescue Department, police and Ipoh City Council.

Pupils from five schools, namely SK Haji Mahmud, SK Seri Kelebang, SK Kelebang Jaya, SJK (T) Klebang and SJK (C) Poi Lam were at the site planting saplings.

Some of the pupils present there were those who recently sat for their UPSR examinations and were proud to be part of the green initiative.

Donations in the form of books worth RM2,000 each were also presented to the five schools by Malaysian Aeon Foundation.

Adriana Nafisah Nasrizal, 12, from SK Kelebang Jaya said she often helped her mother in the garden during the weekends.

"My mother taught me to plant trees.

"It is fun to plant trees with my friends, especially when exams are over," she added.

Dr Abd Latif, in his speech, commended Aeon for their tree planting initiative.

He said with the world's forest being destroyed by man and natural disasters, a harmonious co-existence between nature and humans becomes a global challenge.

"We applaud Aeon for organising public initiatives such as this to create awareness and in bringing environmentalists together to help create a greener community," he added.

Dr Abd Latif said the forest area in the country, including areas where trees have been replanted, covers 58.3%, which is above the 50% target.

"A total of 28 million trees have been planted at the forests," he said, adding that about 30 species planted at Aeon were those from the almost extinct list.

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1 Dr Abd Latif (third from left) together with Nur Qamarina (third from right), and other guests at the tree planting ceremony held at Aeon Klebang. 2 Some of the pupils planting trees at Aeon Klebang. — Photos: RONNIE CHIN/TheStar