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Myanmar varsity joins green platform

Programme aimed at developing global leaders in environment sees participation from nine countries

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OVER the years, the focus has been on climate change and with the United States backing out of the Paris Agreement, it is more important than ever for us to take care of our environment.

Based on Aeon's principle of pursuing peace, respecting humanity and contributing to local communities, the Aeon Environmental Foundation was formed.

"As you all know, the world we live in faces a multitude of environmental problems of global proportions," said Aeon Environmental Foundation executive director Naoki Hayashi.

"There are no national borders when it comes to environmental problems. A global outlook and a coordinated and continuous international effort that transcends boundaries and generations are required," he said.

Knowing the importance of environmental conservation, Aeon Environmental Foundation has set up the Asian Students Environment Platform (ASEP) to develop future global leaders in the field of environment.

Established in 2012 in Japan, the annual programme had a humble beginning with only three countries participating in the first meeting.

To-date, the number has grown to include 72 university students from nine countries,

and universities across the region such as South Korea, Japan, China and Thailand, with Myanmar's Yangon University of Economics joining the ranks as the latest newcomer.

Universiti Malaya deputy vice-chancellor Prof Dr Faisal Rafiq Mahamd Adikan, who thanked the foundation for choosing UM as the host for the 7th ASEP this year, said UM was the only university in Malaysia with treehouse, maze and 80ha of botanical garden, Rimba Ilmu.

The university is ranked the greenest city centre university in Asia and sixth in the world under the UI Green Metric World University Ranking.

Under the theme "Gifts from the Tropical Rainforest", participants conducted fieldwork on the outskirts of Kuala Lumpur and learned about the country's biodiversity.

Among the highlights of the four-day programme, which ends tomorrow, is a tree-planting activity in Kuala Selangor.

Conducted by Aeon Co (M) Bhd, the tree-planting aims to conserve the breeding habitat of fireflies.

Started in the 1960s, the programme thus far has seen the planting of more than 11,666,762 trees around the world.

Participants also visited the Forest Research Institute Malaysia (FRIM), mangrove forests, and the Mah Meri Cultural Village, among others.

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