



Community

[Home](#) > [Metro](#) > [Community](#)

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Sultan joins in tree-planting effort

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Sultan Sharafuddin planting mangrove saplings at the tree-planting programme at Taman Alam Kuala Selangor. Looking on is Azmin.

ABOUT 1,500 people gathered at Taman Alam Kuala Selangor to take part in a tree-planting programme.

Saturday morning's event, themed Forests and Energy, was organised by the state government and Selangor Forestry Department in conjunction with the International Day of Forests.

The International Day of Forests is celebrated on March 21 every year to raise awareness of the importance of preserving and conserving forests to maintain environmental stability.

The event was graced by Sultan of Selangor Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah and Raja Muda of Selangor Tengku Amir Shah.

Also present were Mentri Besar Datuk Seri Azmin Ali, state executive councillors, assemblymen, representatives from Selangor local councils, state departments, non-governmental organisations and the public.

Participants were divided into teams and walked for about 1km before arriving at the site where they were to plant mangrove saplings, namely *bakau kurap* or its scientific name, *rhizophora mucronata*.



1,500 people took part in the event organised by the state government and Selangor Forestry Department. — Photos: ONG SOON HIN/The Star

About 200 students from Inpens International College were among those who took part. They walked for 20 minutes from their campus to the nature park and were all smiles despite the heat.

Among them was Puteri Nurul Amera, 19, who said, "I enjoyed the experience even though it was tough because of the heat and the slippery conditions," she said.

Ahmad Afiq Isyraf, 17, was so excited he lost his gum boots.

"I walked further away to plant my tree and ended up getting stuck in the mud," he laughed.

She said the initiative was a good way to raise awareness of the role of mangrove trees in the park’s ecosystem.

“Being part of this is a good educational experience for all of us,” she said.

In total, 6,060 mangrove saplings were planted.

Selangor Forestry Department planning and certification senior assistant director Raffae Ahmad said the species of mangrove chosen thrives in wetlands such as the nature park.

“This mangrove is dominant here,” he said, adding that mangrove trees acted as barriers to prevent erosion and reduce the impact of waves on the shoreline.

They are also a source of food for birds and aquatic life.



Students were also among those who took part in the event. A total of 6,060 mangrove saplings were planted.

The 324ha Taman Alam Kuala Selangor is rich in flora and fauna and mangrove tiger butterflies, fireflies and silvered leaf monkeys can also be found,

Every year, from September to April, the nature park will see migratory birds from Russia and Siberia arriving and more than 30 species have been recorded.

In his speech, Azmin said the nature park had the potential to be an education and scientific research hub.

“Developing the nature park as an educational ecotourism hub can also provide economic returns to the state,” he said.

He added that to preserve the nature park, the Selangor Forestry Department was in the final process of gazetting it as a permanent forest reserve.

“To ensure sustainable forest management, the state government has guaranteed to maintain a forest area of at least 30% of Selangor.”

“Today, the forest area is 31.5% or 250,129ha of the total area of the state,” he said.

Selangor has also worked with the Malaysia Arborist Society to create policies on managing and conserving trees in the state.

He added that any campaign to highlight the importance of caring for the environment must be carried out consistently and involve all parties.

“Continuous support and cooperation from the private sector and non-governmental organisations will help unite the community in efforts to conserve and protect the environment.”

Booths to educate participants on the flora and fauna at the nature park as well as information on preserving and conserving the environment were set up by organisations such as the Malaysian Nature Society, Global Environment Centre, the Wildlife and National Parks Department (Perhilitan) as well as the state Forestry Department.