



KERATAN SURAT KHABAR

SURAT KHABAR	:	STAR METRO			
TARIKH	:	15/6/2021	MUKA SURAT	:	1 & 3
JABATAN	:	KeTSA			

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News 3



A thick green canopy provides shade to hikers as they walk through the forest in Shah Alam.



The peak garden allows hikers to relax and take a break before continuing on their journey.



Hikers of all ages enjoying a hike at the forest in Bukit Cheraiah, Shah Alam.

'Collaborative management can help save Selangor's forests'

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"If we can protect the SACEF and Bukit Cheraiah forest, it will be the largest urban forest in Selangor and the first urban ecological corridor in Malaysia," she pointed out.

Teoh hopes that the forest can be used as a research hub and environmental interpretive centre.

"The forest has huge potential to be made into an ecotourism spot. "Nature talks, art exhibitions and bird watching programmes can be held in the forest."

"Low-impact structures like a field study centre can be built to accommodate researchers and their field exploration into the forest," she said.

The society learned in a recent study that the SACEF forest had not been excised by the Selangor government.

The study, commissioned by the SACEF Society with funding from



the UN's Global Environment Facility (GEF) Small Grants Programme, was led by University of Nottingham Malaysia School of Environmental and Geographical Sciences adjunct lecturer Dr Teckwyn Lim as well as a team of mapping, legal and forestry experts.

The team found that there were no reports of the forest land being degazetted in the Selangor State Government Gazette.

They gathered all publication of notification in the gazette from 1969 to 2020 and the excision of the area in question had not been made, hence it should still be considered a permanent forest reserve, Dr Lim said.

Following the discovery, the society submitted a letter dated Nov 11, 2020 and Feb 2, 2021 to the Selangor State Secretary and Selangor Forestry Department, requesting a meeting.

Both agencies have yet to reply. Selangor local government, public transportation and new village development committee chairman Ng Sze Han, who chaired the hearing of the proposed road construction through the forest in April, said he would investigate the status of the land as the forestry department representative was absent then.

Another follow-up letter was sent to Ng's office on May 3, requesting an update on the land status.

When contacted, Ng said it was not proper for him to comment on the decision of the hearing, as MBSA was still in the midst of finalising the outcome of the local plan.

Meanwhile, Selangor Forestry Department director Datuk Ahmad Fadzil Abdul Majid said the SACEF area belonged to PKNS.

"The SACEF society set up trails on private land. "Prior to this, the society has urged the government to gazette the land as a permanent forest



A rainbow above the water as sighted by one of the hikers.

reserve," he said. Asked about the absence of the excision notice in the Selangor State Government Gazette, Ahmad Fadzil said when Selangor executive council decides to degazette (the forest land), its status as a permanent forest reserve would be removed.

Teoh, however, said without an excision notice, SACEF should remain a permanent forest reserve.

Currently, the entrance to the forest has been hoarded up due to the lockdown.

Benefits for community

The Kota Damansara forest success story is a motivating factor for the SACEF society.

A collaborative forest management plan by the Selangor Forestry Department and Persatuan Rimba Komuniti Kota Damansara (KDKCF) has proven beneficial to stakeholders as well as conservation efforts of the 320ha Kota Damansara Forest Reserve.

KDKCF honorary advisor Justine Vaz said their model was an example of how combined institutional willingness, mutual goodwill and shared value systems provided a strong foundation for urban forest conservation.

"Together, we are able to contribute to the preservation of the last remnant of lowland mixed



The signboard by SACEF Society at the entrance of the forest in Section U13, Setia Alam.



The Shah Alam Community Forest is home to different types of animals, including this dusky leaf monkey.

dipterocarp forest in the Petaling district.

"Following the gazette-ment of the forest in 2010, we partnered with the forestry department in holding stakeholder workshops and focus group discussions.

"Through these we were able to outline a framework in which the local community would have a role in supporting the forestry department in safeguarding the forest and also play a role in public education and community engagement.

"These elements were subsequently included in a management plan for the forest reserve," she said.

She noted that sustainable forest trails played a key role in building community support for the protection of the forest in the early days.

"Today, KDKCF continues to maintain this legacy of low impact forest trails that were built by community volunteers and Temuan Orang Asli team, which is managed by social enterprise MyChangkul.

"Now in its 10th year, KDKCF has facilitated a number of community events, school visits and corporate social responsibility activities, as well as learning visits from community groups and even govern-

ment agencies keen to learn from our system.

"We firmly believe that all of these offer a dynamic conservation model with the potential for replication throughout the country," she said.

Justine added that SACEF was regarded by conservationists as an important remnant of lowland forest.

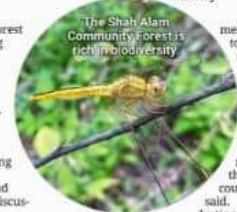
"In addition to providing a refuge for biodiversity, the forest also provides essential ecosystem services and plays a role in mitigating the impacts of global heating and climate crisis.

"Communities have a deep concern for forests in their areas and should be part of a long-term strategy to protect and co-manage them with the relevant authority.

"They bring considerable resources in the form of funding, time and skills, which are useful for engaging people in education and environmental protection.

"This also reduces the budgetary requirements on forestry departments for roles willingly played by local residents," she explained.

The community, she said, had voluntarily cared for the forest since before its gazettement and would continue to do so in the future.



The Shah Alam Community Forest is rich in biodiversity.