



KERATAN AKHBAR

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100HA

# GOVT PLANS THIRD ELEPHANT SANCTUARY

RM20 million facility in Perak will mitigate rise in human-elephant conflicts, says minister

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**T**HE government will build an elephant sanctuary in Aman Jaya, Perak, to mitigate the rise in human-elephant conflicts.

Water, Land and Natural Resources Minister Dr A. Xavier Jayakumar said the RM20 million sanctuary in an area spanning 100ha would be the third of its kind, after the Sungai Deka Elephant Sanctuary in Hulu Terengganu, Terengganu, and the

Kampung Paniti Elephant Sanctuary in Kota Tinggi, Johor.

He said there was a need for the facility — to be built under the 12th Malaysia Plan — to reduce incidences of elephants encroaching on villages and plantations.

“Elephants from ‘conflict areas’ will be caught and released into the sanctuary. The exact number of elephants that can be housed there has yet to be finalised.”

Jayakumar said the Wildlife and National Parks Department (Perhilitan) had introduced programmes to minimise human-elephant conflict, including installing electric fences to prevent the mammals from encroaching on human settlements.

“These programmes have reduced losses caused by human-elephant conflicts by 44 per cent between 2015 and last year,” he said at the World Elephant Day celebration at the Kuala Gandah Elephant Conservation Centre in Lanjang here yesterday.



Water, Land and Natural Resources Minister Dr A. Xavier Jayakumar (second from right) feeding an elephant at the World Elephant Day celebration at the Kuala Gandah Elephant Conservation Centre in Lanjang, Temerloh, yesterday. PIC BY FARIZUL HAFIZ AWANG

Jayakumar said the sanctuary was important to check the drop in the population of wild elephants in the peninsula, which is estimated to be 2,000. There are about 2,500 elephants in Sabah and Sarawak.

He said Perhilitan had taken measures to tackle threats faced by the animals.

“These include increasing patrols to deter poachers from setting up snare traps. We have the support of 2,000 police-

men to work with Perhilitan rangers. They are equipped with firearms to deter poachers.

Jayakumar said the sanctuary would enable volunteers to participate in activities involving rescued elephants.

Actress Maya Karin has been appointed “The Voice of Wildlife” to assist the ministry and Perhilitan to organise volunteer activities and create awareness of wildlife conservation.