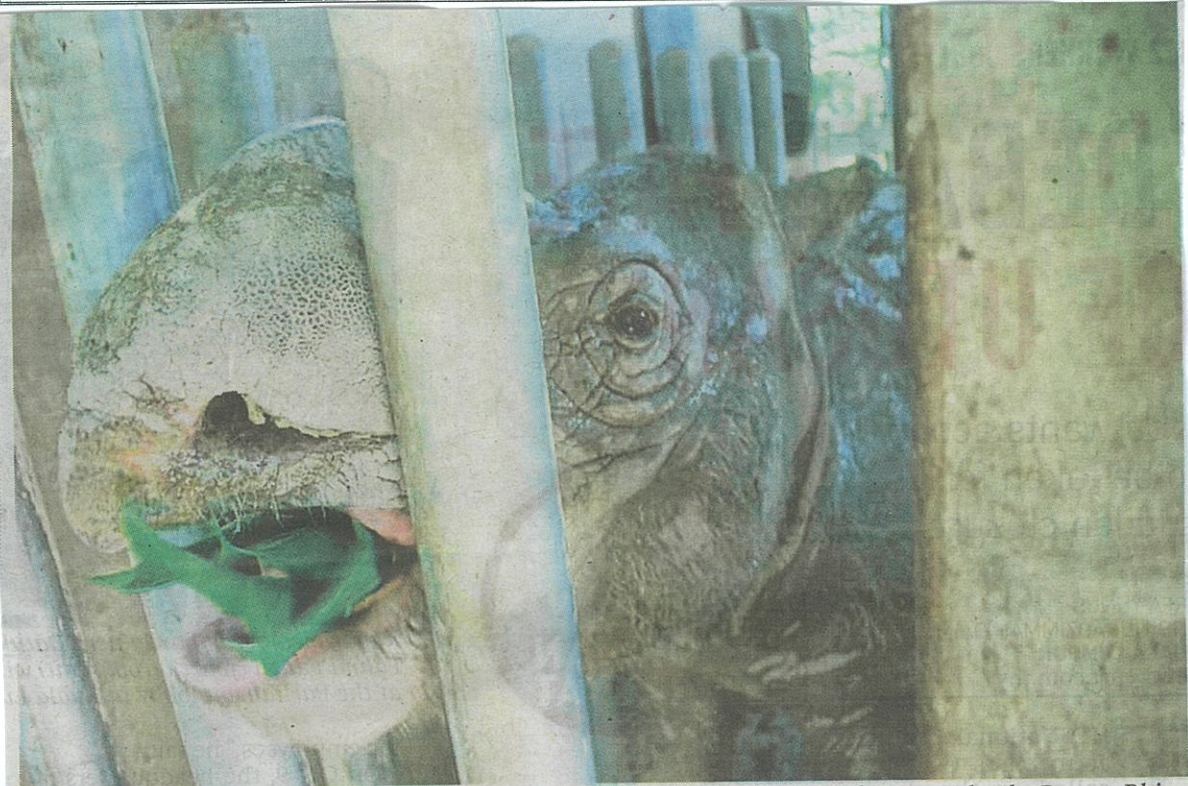




KERATAN AKHBAR

AKHBAR	:	NEW STRAITS TIMES
TARIKH	:	16/10/2019
JABATAN	:	PERHILITAN
KLASIFIKASI	:	<b>PERHATIAN</b>



Iman, Malaysia's last Sumatran rhino, is being cared for at the Tabin Wildlife Reserve by the Borneo Rhino Alliance. PIC BY ROY GOH

CONSERVATION EFFORT

# IVF treatment on last Malaysian Sumatran rhino fails

**KOTA KINABALU:** An in-vitro fertilisation (IVF) treatment on an egg retrieved from the last Sumatran rhino in Malaysia, Iman, has failed in a procedure carried out early this month.

The attempt to save the species from extinction in the country saw the cell degenerate within days after injecting sperm which was harvested from the last male rhino, Tam, that has since died.

It was learnt that after the thawed sperm was injected, the egg cell failed to divide and there was no embryo formed.

A source, who had supported the cause of the rhinos over the years, said that while the failure was disheartening, "we believe the effort should continue and that we should learn from the experience".

The treatment involved Professor Arief Boediono, an experienced world-class IVF practitioner from Universiti Pertanian Bogor, Indonesia as well as the Centre for Wildlife and Livestock Innovation from the Faculty of Sustainable Agriculture, University Malaysia Sabah in Sandakan.

The process of retrieving the egg from Iman was done by a team of experts from the Leibniz Institute of Zoo and Wildlife Research in Berlin, Germany, led by Prof Thomas Hildebrandt, at the Tabin Wildlife Reserve in Lahad Datu together with the Borneo Rhino Alliance (Bora).

"Following the attempt we be-

lieve the quality of the sperm was low and that to continue the IVF treatment effort, we need to try and get sperm samples from those rhinos in captivity in Indonesia.

"For now Iman is relatively healthy and though she has a tumour in her uterus, she is still producing oocytes or eggs," he said, but added that there was a risk that Iman may stop producing eggs.

In the past, it was believed the quality of sperm from Tam was likely a factor in similar disappointing results from previous in-vitro attempts. Experts in Sabah continue to collaborate with Indonesia in the pioneering effort.

Previously, Sabah Wildlife department director Augustine Tuga had expressed hope in the

attempt through the programme to produce an embryo through in vitro for the species. He had also hoped to further cooperate with Indonesia on the noble effort.

Tam's sperm was retrieved, frozen and kept for breeding before the rhino died in May, and while Iman can still produce eggs, she can no longer get pregnant due to her uterine tumour.

In August, Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Christina Liew led a delegation of state representatives and the department to Indonesia to discuss conservation efforts for the Sumatran rhinoceros.

Before Tam died, another rhino kept at the Borneo Rhino Sanctuary in Lahad Datu died. The female species named Puntung was euthanised after battling with cancer in June 2017.

	SUBUH (am)	SYURUK	ZUHUR	ASAR (pm)	MAGHRIB	ISYAK
Melaka	5:39	6:55	12:59	4:14	7:00	8:10
Penang	5:48	7:03	1:07	4:23	7:05	8:15
K. Lumpur	5:42	6:57	1:02	4:18	7:02	8:11
Johor Bahru	5:32	6:49	12:53	4:08	6:54	8:04
Kuantan	5:36	6:53	12:56	4:11	6:56	8:06
Ipah	5:45	6:59	1:04	4:21	7:04	8:13