

Sowing seeds of climate resilience



Mangrove planting effort at Pantai Malindo in Balik Pulau involving staff members of the Penang Forestry Department, Penang Infrastructure Corporation Sdn Bhd and Silicon Island Development Sdn Bhd.

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Penang community's effort in planting trees a step towards safeguarding environmental biodiversity for future generations

MORE than 256,000 people created history when they planted some 1.25 million trees throughout Penang during the "Planting One Million Trees Within a Day in Conjunction with Earth Day".

At Penang Hill, more than 30 indigenous species were planted.

Nature Green Farm (NGF) director KP Ong said among the plants were *Leea indica*, *tecoma*, *kemboja*, *bougainvillea*, *misai kucing* and *tongkat ali*.

They also planted three *Maingaya malayana* saplings, a species of witch hazel, along the Moniot Road trail.

"The *Maingaya malayana* plant was thought to be extinct for the past 200 years until British botanist Charles Curtis came across it in 1873.

"Since I spend many of my waking hours at NGF on Penang Hill, I can dedicate ample time to ensuring that the saplings thrive and grow into maturity," he said, adding that saplings of other species were also planted along the 3.5km trail.

Ong was among 270 volunteers from 23 groups who took part in the event at the Penang Hill Biosphere Reserve.

Hikers Roundtable president-cum-founder Tony Leng said they had worked with



Ahmad Fuzi (second left) and his wife Toh Puan Khadijah Mohd Nor (second right) showing the number one sign as a symbolic gesture that the one-millionth tree has been planted at the grounds of Seri Mutiara. Showing similar gesture are Rozali (right) and Rosli. — Photo: TYT Penang official Facebook page.

groups like Penang Hill Corporation (PHC), Malaysian Association of Public Advocacy for Nature (Mapan), CIMB Islamic and The Habitat Foundation to plant more than 2,000 trees on the hill.

"The event gave participants valuable insights into sustainability and conservation of the environment.

"It is hoped that this will help

spread the crucial message of being in harmony with nature."

The Hikers Roundtable is an alliance of outdoor recreation groups in Penang.

PHC thanked the event participants for their involvement that saw over 6,000 indigenous plants being planted in the Penang Hill Biosphere Reserve.

The Penang branch of the Federation of Malaysian

Manufacturers (FMM) also played a crucial role in the event by contributing both manpower and sponsoring saplings.

LH Tan, a committee member of the FMM Penang Branch, said over 80 staff members from FMM and participating member companies joined hands to plant about 3,000 *meranti* saplings along the Penang Hill.

"This collective effort not only enhances the natural beauty of our surroundings but also reaffirms our commitment to environmental sustainability.

"Together, we are making a difference in preserving our planet for generations to come," he said, adding that FMM and its members contributed a remarkable 20,000 *meranti* forest saplings to the event held statewide.

FMM Penang Branch chairman Datuk Seri Lee Teong Li, accompanied by vice-chairman Datuk HK Tan, was also present to plant a *meranti* sapling.

Retired civil servant Khoo Chee Keng, 68, said he and his wife Ooi Saw Tuan, 67, each planted a sapling along the historic Moniot trail.

"We have made note of where we planted our trees and this gives us a reason to visit the

area more periodically to check on their progress and survival."

Record-breaking feat

At 11.30am on that historic day, the target of seeing one million trees planted in Penang was achieved.

The Yang di-Pertua Negri Tun Ahmad Fuzi Abdul Razak was the man of the hour as he planted the one-millionth tree at the grounds of Seri Mutiara, his official residence as head of state.

By 5.30pm on the same day, the number of trees swelled to 1,251,512 across various locations statewide.

Organised by the Penang Governor's Charity Foundation (Yayasan Amal Tuan Yang Terutama Yang di-Pertua Negri Pulau Pinang) in collaboration with the office of state housing and environment committee chairman Datuk Seri Sundarajoo Somu, the event also made it into the Malaysia Book of Records (MBR).

Foundation chief executive officer Datuk Seri Rozali Mahmud received the award from MBR chief operating officer Christopher Wong Hong Wai at Seri Mutiara.

Rozali praised the determina-



(Above) Some of the participants hard at work in planting a tree.

(Left) Siew Khim (sixth left), Penang Island mayor Datuk A. Rajendran (fourth right) and other participants planting a tree at Taman Areca in Lebuh Sungai Pinang 7. — Photo courtesy of Lim Siew Khim



Hikers gathering to do their part at the 'Planting One Million Trees Within a Day in Conjunction with Earth Day' event.

tion and commitment of Penangites, and acknowledged that their spirit was instrumental in the event's success.

He said the achievement was made possible with the strong commitment of various stakeholders involved.

He also stressed the event's significance in addressing climate change, safeguarding environmental biodiversity and leaving a lasting impact on the ecosystems for future generations.

Rozali also thanked everyone involved, including government departments, the private sector, schools, universities, communities and individuals who contributed, no matter how small.

"Your efforts are greatly appreciated," he said, hoping that a significant number of kaffir lime trees given to the residents of Penang would be well preserved as they could generate substantial income.

"We have distributed some 222,000 kaffir lime trees to the people. If these kaffir lime trees are well maintained, they can generate an income of no less than RM26mil annually," he said.

"This is a new income for Penang residents, especially communities in villages and participating associations."

Rozali also hoped for the programme to be a paradigm shift as it had proven the ability of the people of Penang to create community bonds and environmental greenery.

"The significant impact of this programme is that most areas in Penang can be greened with

in just five months.

"All along the roadsides and residential areas, residents are amazed because in the blink of an eye or just a few days, there are trees in front of their homes. This is a very effective game changer in our greening efforts," he added.

Also present at the ceremony were Ahmad Fuzi, Chief Minister Chow Kon Yeow, Penang state secretary Datuk Rosli Isa and Penang Legislative Assembly Speaker Datuk Law Choo Kiang.

Others were Deputy Chief Minister I Datuk Dr Mohamad Abdul Hamid, state exco members Lim Siew Khim, Daniel Gooi Zi Sen and Sundarajoo, and Penang Green Council general manager Josephine Tan Mei Ling.

Ahmad Fuzi commended Penang for making history with this remarkable achievement.

Chow praised Ahmad Fuzi for initiating the one million tree-planting project, noting its potential to mitigate the impact of climate change and reduce carbon emissions and greenhouse gases.

"The project is also very much in line with the Penang 2030 vision of 'A Family-Focused Green and Smart State that Inspires the Nation."

"I would like to thank Rozali and Sundarajoo for spearheading the project, and all stakeholders who participated," he added.

Chow said for a vibrant state like Penang, which is famous for its attraction to foreign investors and its status as one of

the most desirable destinations on the peninsula, the tree planting initiative was a crucial factor to complement the thriving industrial sector.

Hive of activity

Over at Pantai Malindo in Balik Pulau, some 90 staff members of the Penang Forestry Department, Penang Infrastructure Corporation Sdn Bhd (PIC) and Silicon Island Development Sdn Bhd also planted about 20,000 mangrove saplings.

Led by PIC chief executive officer Datuk Seri Farizan Darus, the initiative was also part of an agreement signed between the three parties last year to plant 200,000 trees at suitable areas within Penang by 2030.

Tunku Abdul Rahman University of Management and Technology (TAR UMT) also successfully planted 5,048 saplings around the Penang branch campus in Tanjung Bungah as part of the event on Earth Day.

Four different types of trees - *Caesalpinia ferrea* (also known as leopard tree), durian tree, rambutan tree and *Syzygium papilloum* (kelat paya) were planted at various spots around the campus.

TAR UMT president Prof Dr Lee Sze Wei, who launched the tree planting event at the university campus, highlighted the significance of the initiative that aimed to protect the biodiversity and environment.

"We are not just planting trees, but also sowing seeds

for a greener, more sustainable future.

"As an institution, TAR UMT is proud to be a part of the global fight against climate change," Dr Lee said, emphasising on the importance of environmental stewardship.

"By planting these trees, we hope to foster a sense of pride and responsibility within our campus community."

"We are all stewards of our environment, and every action, big or small, contributes to a more sustainable future," he added.

Dr Lee said the newly planted trees would contribute to a cleaner campus environment by absorbing pollutants and releasing oxygen.

"Additionally, their roots will help prevent soil erosion. The diverse selection of species will also promote a more resilient ecosystem," he added.

A total of 5,000 *kelat paya* trees were sponsored by Ahmad Fuzi through his foundation while the remaining 48 trees were contributed by Oriental Holdings Berhad through a RM21,000 sponsorship.

Dr Lee together with Oriental Holdings executive chairman Datuk Loh Kian Chong and Loh Guat Hong, TAR UMT vice-president Assoc Prof Dr Chook Ka Joo, TAR UMT Penang branch head Assoc Prof Dr Toh Guat Guan and other invited guests planted the tree saplings.

Also present were Penang MCA secretary Yeoh Chin Kah and representatives from Advance Dispute Resolution Centre.



Ong planting the endangered Maingaya malayana along the Moniot Road trail in Penang Hill.



Rozali (in songkok) being presented with the award for the most trees planted in a day by Wong, witnessed by Ahmad Fuzi (fourth right) and Chow (fifth right). Also present were (from left) Rosli, Dr Mohamad, Law and Sundarajoo. — Photo courtesy of Buletin Mutiara