



**Sultan of Selangor Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah watering a plant after launching the the Sultan Idris Shah Forestry Education Centre in Puchong yesterday. At left is Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin. Pic by Rosela Ismail**

# RM18m forest site

**UNIQUE:** Sultan launches Ayer Hitam Forest education centre

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**N**ATURE lovers now have a new destination to look out for — the Ayer Hitam Forest Reserve in Puchong.

The forest reserve was opened yesterday with the launching of the Sultan Idris Shah Forestry Education Centre.

Sultan of Selangor Sultan Sharafuddin Idris Shah said the state government should extend the lease for Universiti Putra Malaysia from 80 to 999 years.

“Though the size has been reduced from 4,270ha to 1,176ha, the forest is rich with unique flora and fauna and should be maintained.”

He also urged the state Forestry Department and the university to maintain the forest in its original state.

In conjunction with the World

Forestry Day yesterday, university students and staff planted a thousand trees before the launch.

The RM18 million education centre was sponsored through the Ninth Malaysia Plan under the Higher Education Ministry's budget.

Present at the launch were former prime minister Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and Higher Education Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Khaled Nordin.

The Ayer Hitam Forest Reserve will also serve as an outdoor lab for forestry students and will be open to students or groups interested in environmental activities for motivational courses, team-building workshops, camping, jungle trekking and paintball activities.

Nature lovers interested in carrying out activities there can log on to <http://ayerhitam.upm.edu.my> or contact 03-8946 7171 for more information.