



Roses among thorns: Student Norhayati Mohamad Hussain (left) and writer Syifarida Muhamad Zaki holding D24 durians at a durian tasting session at UPM, Serdang.

UPM hopes durian love revival campaign bears fruit

By **YUEN MEIKENG** and **RAHIMY RAHIM**
newsdesk@thestar.com.my

SERDANG: Durians are aplenty during the current bumper season and Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) hopes to revive the love for the fruit, especially among youths.

UPM student affairs and alumni deputy vice-chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Mohd Fauzi Ramlan said he had observed that the passion of eating the King of Fruits among youths seemed to have waned.

"I find that youths are less fond of eating durians, saying that its smell is too strong," said Dr Mohd Fauzi, a plant physiologist.

"During my generation, both the young and old would gather to eat durian and it made for good family bonding. These days, this culture is less prevalent especially among teenagers," he said at a durian tasting session at UPM here.

Dr Mohd Fauzi said that is why the university was continuously promoting the durian through education and research efforts.

"We have been trying to clone the perfect

breed of durian by collecting samples from durian competitions nationwide," he said, adding that samples from the best durian including the D2, D24 and Musang King, were collected and planted in UPM.

While the durian season is here again, Dr Mohd Fauzi said the fruits may not be as sweet as during the hot season as the damp weather slowed down the sugar conversion in the fruits.

Those who want to buy durian grown in UPM can go to its sales centre which is open on weekdays from 8.30am to 5pm.

Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority (Fama) chairman Datuk Badruddin Amiruldin said if there was an oversupply of durian, the authority would buy them over from the small holders and kampung folk.

"We would then turn it into other products such as jam paste and kuih. This allows people to earn extra money from their harvest," he said.

He also noted that Fama would be holding its "Jom Makan Durian" festival, promoting locals to eat the fruit on Dec 7 in Putrajaya.