

UPM working with Xavier to develop Kuala Langat

WITH its expertise in bio-composite technology, Universiti Putra Malaysia's Institute of Tropical Forestry and Forest Products (Introp) recently inked a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with Kuala Langat member of parliament Dr A. Xavier Jayakumar to develop his constituency.

Dr Xavier, who is Water, Land and Natural Resources minister, took the opportunity to express his appreciation to Introp researcher Associate Professor Dr Mohamed Thariq Hameed Sultan for helping to develop the pineapple hub in Teluk Panglima Garang, Selangor, since April.

According to the former, there is a lot of development potential in the southwest district of Selangor. This multi-stakeholder initiative could result in a successful community revitalisation.

"As a large percentage of the Kuala Langat community is involved in agriculture, we need to utilise the local landscape, including areas near the rivers.

"This partnership has a clear goal, which is to improve the livelihood of the local community. From my observation, the villages with elderly people are becoming disengaged and left behind as more youngsters leave for the city," said Dr Xavier.

"Through this collaboration, we aim to incentivise more young people to stay by providing them the opportunity to generate a lucrative income.

"I hope to see the agricultural industry in Kuala Langat thrive with cash crops and forestry products."

In a precursor project, Introp had developed a natural fibre extraction machine to process pineapple leaves and turn them into bio-composite materials.

With high impact strength and low production cost, those materials could be used to make vehicle parts, aerial drones, bullet-proof

vests and other advanced equipment.

UPM vice-chancellor Professor Datuk Dr Aini Ideris said the collaboration was an important milestone for the university in its quest to become a globally-recognised institution.

"While it doesn't signal the beginning of a collaboration between UPM and the Kuala Langat parliamentary constituency, nevertheless, this collaboration acts as a driving force to many more ideas for other collaborations."

She said the partnership covered a wide range expertise to be shared with the local community.

Besides economic activities, UPM academics and students will also carry out community service in Kuala Langat, where they will tutor local children under the varsity's "Professor on Duty" and "Bijak Matematik" programmes.

"Introp UPM welcomes the Kuala Langat community to enrol in our postgraduate programmes and short courses. This will increase the capacity of human resources in research and development for the bio-resource industry," said Aini.

In the near future, the university plans to publish a book on Yankee pineapples with Dr Xavier's story as an inspiration to local youths.

As a premier national research centre, Introp was awarded the Higher Institution Centre of Excellence status by the Education Ministry in 2016. Most of its academic staff comprised lecturers from UPM's Forestry Faculty.

The MoU was signed on Sept 4 at Introp in UPM Serdang.

Present was Introp director Professor Dr Ahmad Ainuddin Nuruddin.



Dr A. Xavier Jayakumar (second from right) exchanging documents with Professor Datuk Dr Aini Ideris at a ceremony in Universiti Putra Malaysia's Institute of Tropical Forestry and Forest Products (Introp) in Serdang recently. With them are Professor Dr Ahmad Ainuddin Nuruddin (left) and Dr Xavier's political secretary Fazly Faizal Mohamed Razally.

