

IBTP Organises International Conference On Ants

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MONDAY, 28 OCTOBER – Ants play a vital role in maintaining the nutrient cycle and aeration in the ecosystem and maintenance of organic matters.

The Vice-Chancellor of Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS), Prof. Datuk Dr. Mohd Harun Abdullah in his speech said that ants, being one of the world's tiniest creatures, have been identified as one of the most important organisms in regulating the balance of ecosystems.

His speech was read by Dyg. Rukiah Awg. Amit, Head Librarian of Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) at the official opening of the 9th ANet International Conference and Meeting organised by the Institute For Tropical Biology and Conservation (IBTP) for the second time at UMS.

“If ants were to disappear overnight, the land’s ecosystems would collapse, soil would lose its fertility and many plants would no longer be pollinated,” she said at the opening ceremony which was attended by more than 60 local and foreign participants.

Earlier, President of International Network For Study of Asian Ants (ANet), Dr. Himender Bharti said that ANet had been successful in generating interests among young researchers in Asia.

“It’s about time Asian myrmecologists apart from cataloguing the ant biodiversity should also explore other avenues like molecular biology, ecology and phylogenetic etc., so as to generate a holistic view regarding Asian ants,” he added.

Dr. Himender was speaking at the opening ceremony of ANet Conference with the theme 'Ant Ecology, Evolution and Taxonomy - Asian Myrmecology in the 21st Century'. The objective of the conference was for ant researchers especially those working on ants of Asia to update their ant research activities and foster potential research collaboration between institutions.

Also present at the event was Acting Director of Institute For Tropical Biology and Conservation (IBTP) UMS, Assoc. Prof. Dr. Charles S. Vairappan and Prof. Datin Dr. Maryati Mohammed of Universiti Tun Hussein Onn who was the pioneer Director of IBTP and First ANet President. – *FL*

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