

Biodiversity centre in the offing

NST 09.03.2007 P. 22

■ By Julia Chan

joolea@nst.com.my

KOTA KINABALU: Sabah will soon have a biodiversity centre housing samples of flora and fauna found in the state.

The centre will be set up under Phase Two of the Bornean Biodiversity and Ecosystems Conservation (BBEC) programme, to be carried out later this year.

Deputy programme director and deputy chairman of the steering committee, Datuk Dr Mohd Noh Dalimin, said the

centre would be a milestone for the programme which began in 2001.

"We need to have such a centre because at present, most of the flora is kept at the Sabah Forestry Research Centre in Sepilok, Sandakan, and the rest at Universiti Malaysia Sabah," said Noh.

The centre, he said, would be a place to build a comprehensive collection of flora and fauna and could also be used as a data collection centre and for research.

Phase Two of the BBEC pro-

gramme, a joint initiative among the state government, the Japan International Co-operation Agency (Jica) and UMS, will begin in July.

It will be a five-year programme that follows up on previous efforts.

"The budget for this phase will be substantially lower as we will be focusing on consolidating efforts between the parties and continuing the previous programmes," Noh said.

Jica preparatory team leader Yukihide Katsuta said the

budget for the BBEC Phase Two programme was between US\$3 million and US\$5 million (RM10.5 million and RM17 million).

The pilot programme received an allocation of US\$10 million from Jica.

Some of the hardware, such as vehicles and computers, will be carried forward to the second phase.

Target areas under BBEC Phase Two are the Crocker Range Park, Sungai Kinabatangan and the Segama river basin.