

# UMS' marine museum

## celebrates World Ocean Day

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### **Khabil Kiram**

**KOTA KINABALU:** The World Ocean Day was celebrated at Sabah's only Aquarium and Marine Museum, Thursday, to celebrate the ocean by raising awareness on the rising need for attention in ocean care.

The celebration was held at Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) Borneo Marine Research Institute, here.

School children and random visitors flocked to the museum entrance when it opened at 8:30am to join the celebration.

The celebration also saw the launch of the Ocean Facts and Views bulletin.

UMS Vice Chancellor Prof. Datuk Dr. Harun Abdullah said that bulletin contains "facts about oceans and thought-provoking views of scientists, which are original and intended to provoke serious thinking, and with a powerful carry-home message."

"The ocean is the largest carbon sink on Earth but little attention has been paid to the coastal and marine ecosystems in addressing the climate mitigation towards this end.

"I would like this role of ocean habitats to receive the attention it deserves," said Harun in his ceremony officiating speech that was delivered by UMS Research and Innovation Centre Director Prof. Dr. Felix Tongkul.

Institute Director Prof. Dr. Saleem Mustafa said that the museum was built to communicate the significance of the marine ecosystem and its challenges to the public.

Among the challenges faced by the ocean are acidification caused by manmade carbon dioxide and global warming.

"Acidification in the sea is one of the challenges we have to address. What we can do is adapt and slow down the rate of climate change," said Saleem.

Apart of educating and addressing the public on adapting to climate change, the museum and aquarium also showcases a variety of interesting things to look at and learn.

Among them are a whale skeleton found in Tuaran and specimens collected during the institute's yearly expeditions and live marine life like turtles, dolphins and corals.

"We are showcasing the marine biodiversity of Sabah. We even have some species of corals that have never been recorded before. It was recorded for the first time here and we've preserved it," said Saleem.

Apart from showcasing Sabah's biodiversity, the Institute also takes part in rescue and rehabilitation programmes, especially with dolphins.

Saleem said that Sabah has both resident and transient residents of dolphins like the Irrawady dolphins that swim through the rivers of Kinabatangan.

He added that in the last year, the institute has rescued three dolphins but they were too badly injured and did not survive.