

## Forest Dept, UPM Bintulu jointly conduct biodiversity mission in Bukit Kana National Park

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UPM Bintulu students and staff members gather for a group photo before embarking on the nine-day expedition.

SIBU: Sarawak Forest Department (SFD) is partnering with Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) Bintulu Campus in a scientific expedition to identify and record the biodiversity in Bukit Kana National Park in Tatau District.

According to the department's assistant director Azahari Omar, the nine-day programme involves 30 university students and staff members, led by UPM Bintulu Forestry Science Department head Dr Roland Kueh Jui Heng.

The main objective of the expedition themed 'Unlocking the Secret of Bukit Kana National Park' is to explore and study the potential held within the rich biodiversity in the park, he adds.

"Areas to be studied include botanicals, soil science, insects and other wildlife, herbs, wood and palm trees.

"The findings will be used to conserve and preserve the park and to become the basis for empowering the Bukit Kana National Park Management Plan," he spoke at the launch of the expedition in the park on Saturday.

Azahari said the department is concerned about forest conservation and preservation efforts, in line with Sarawak government's aim to gazette a total of one million hectares of totally protected areas (TPAs) in Sarawak. It is known that Bukit Kana National Park, which covers a land area of 4,923 hectares, was gazetted on Jan 15, 2015.

"It is one of 42 national parks in Sarawak. The park has rich biodiversity that has yet to be explored and recorded," said Azahari.