

The Borneo Post
<http://www.theborneopost.com/?p=16307>
Tuesday, April 10th, 2007 [accessed 10 April 2007]

Japanese to help 'green' rainforests**

By Yu Ji

The team will start a new 300-hectare tree-planting project at Balai Ringin and Apeng, Serian

KUCHING: As talks on curbing global warming gather steam, the Japan-Malaysia Association (JTA) has been embarking on a regeneration of tropical rainforest" here since 1995.

A 32-strong Japanese delegation, including the consul-general of Japan in Kota Kinabalu, will arrive here on April 12 to start a new 300-hectare tree-planting project at Balai Ringin and Apeng, Serian.

The project, co-organised with Kinoshita Group, one of the largest companies in the Japanese housing industry, will plant local tree species such as kapur bukit and engkabang jantung.

Each hectare is expected to be planted with 200 seedlings via a "line planting method."

"The rainforest is a treasure house of diversified ecosystem," a JTA statement said.

"Rainforests play a very important role in conserving the environment, regional cultures and genetic resources. Therefore, it is important that we take immediate action to regenerate and conserve rainforests early."

A digital video disc (DVD) production team and Japanese actress Mayumi Kitamura will be documenting the project along with locals and Japanese volunteers. The project covers the forestation, maintenance and construction of forest roads throughout the 300-hectare area.

Japanese volunteers and forestry experts will continue to visit the project site twice a year.

JPA, established in 1961, is an affiliate of the Japanese Foreign Affairs Ministry, and chaired by Takeo Hiranuma, a former Economy and Industry Minister.

The rainforest regeneration project marks the 50th anniversary of Japan-Malaysia diplomatic relations (as well as Malaysia's 50th anniversary of independence).

The delegation will also visit the Semengoh Wildlife Reserve and conduct an exchange programme with the Sarawak Forest Department during their stay here.

**** *The hard-copy version of the article had "Japanese to help regrow rainforests" as the heading***