

| | |
|-----------|-----------------|
| Newspaper | THE STAR |
| Date | 16 OCTOBER 2016 |

Tasik Chini on the road to recovery

The Star 16/10/2016

Lake once again filled with famous lotus plants and aquatic life

By **ONG HAN SEAN**
hansean@thestar.com.my

PEKAN: Tasik Chini that was once devoid of its famous lotus plants is now on its road to recovery, thanks to the Federal and state governments' commitment to conserve and preserve the lake.

The Tasik Chini Freshwater Laboratory Complex was built by the East Coast Economic Region Development Council (ECERDC) to carry out research activities and water quality monitoring.

The complex, which was launched by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak yesterday, consists of three laboratory buildings that are part of the Tasik Chini Research Centre.

ECERDC chief executive officer Datuk Seri Jebasingam Issace John said the Federal and state governments as well as the council were collaborating with Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia, key government agencies and local communities on a series of rehabilitation and conservation projects.

"These include embankment rehabilitation, slope stabilisation, a fish nursery and lake clean-up.

"Seven water quality monitoring stations located at the major feeder rivers surrounding the lake were also built.

"These actions have rejuvenated the lake and improved the overall water quality to Class II from Class III in 2008, enabling recreational activities to be safely conducted," Jebasingam said.

"The goal now is to further improve the water quality to Class I

by 2018, which means it will be safe for consumption without additional treatment except boiling.

"At the same time, this will enable Tasik Chini to retain the Biosphere Reserve status granted by Unesco," he said.

Jebasingam said that the second phase of Tasik Chini's preservation work was already underway with construction of hostels for researchers and other eco-tourism facilities.

"Once completed next year, it will provide opportunities for in-situ monitoring and research for academicians while deepening the understanding of Tasik Chini among locals and tourists," he said, adding that the orang asli would continue to be engaged as main players of the eco-tourism industry here.

On the key improvements achieved at Tasik Chini, the head of the research centre, Prof Datuk Dr Mushrifah Idris said that the lake's iconic lotus or *nelumbo nucifera* was reintroduced through a plot seedling approach to revive the lake's natural ecosystem.

"The fish population from the *cyprinidae* species has also flourished while maintaining the diversity of fish in Tasik Chini," Dr Mushrifah said.

Najib was accompanied by Mentri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob and Natural Resources and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Dr Wan Junaidi Tuanku Jaafar during his visit.

The Prime Minister also took the time to join the local community in a tree-planting programme and later released fish fry into the lake.