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## FRI strengthens marine conservation efforts - DOF

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**PUTRAJAYA:** The Pulau Layang-Layang Coral Garden project by the Bintawa Fisheries Research Institute (FRI) in Sarawak is one of the Department of Fisheries' (DOF) key initiatives aimed at preserving and restoring the country's marine environment.

The project is the largest man-made coral garden in Malaysia, which has earned a spot in the Malaysia Book of Records and has been nominated for the JCI Malaysia Sustainable Development Award 2025.

DOF director-general Datuk Adnan Hussain said the project not only supports the conservation of marine biodiversity but also enhances the mechanism for absorbing natural carbon (blue carbon) through the creation of limestone structures formed by coral reef organisms.

"In addition, the Bintawa FRI is actively conducting research on blue carbon ecosystems, such as seagrass habitats, which are capable of sequestering carbon more efficiently than terrestrial plants," he said.

He added that the seagrass habitat restoration initiative – using ex-situ propagation techniques at Rantau Abang FRI in Terengganu – represents a proactive step towards ensuring the long-term sustainability of this ecosystem and its role in mitigating climate change.

Adnan said this in a statement issued in conjunction with Earth Day, celebrated annually on April 22.

He said that Gelang Patah FRI in Johor has developed an effluent treatment system using biological filter media made from shellfish waste. The system not only helps stabilise water parameters in aquaculture but also contributes to carbon absorption through

the formation of microorganism biofilms.

Apart from that, Glami Lemi FRI in Negeri Sembilan became the first research institute in Malaysia to install solar panels under a Solar Energy Supply Agreement (SARE) with Tenaga Nasional Berhad (TNB).

"With a generation capacity of 572 kilowatts, the system is expected to save RM6.7 million in operating costs over 20 years. It reflects IPPs' commitment to adopting environmentally friendly alternative energy sources," said Adnan.

He said the Earth Day celebration is not merely symbolic, but a reflection of the DOF's continued dedication to safeguarding the nation's marine heritage. Through FRIs, the department will continue to spearhead research and innovation initiatives aimed at conserving marine ecosystems, empowering fishing communities, and ensuring the long-term sustainability of national fisheries resources. — Bernama