

# Transfer of Sumatran Rhino to Cincinnati Zoo timely

B.P.O.R. 12/14

**KOTA KINABALU:** "It is time," said Borneo Rhino Alliance (BORA) executive director Datuk Dr Junaidi Payne of the unanimous decision by the State Cabinet to allow the transfer of Sabah's Sumatran Rhinoceros on loan to the Cincinnati Zoo (US) under a collaborative natural breeding in captivity programme geared towards stopping the extinction of the species.

"Saving critically endangered species like the Sumatran Rhinoceros cannot be done if we think in terms of nationalism and emotion...I am grateful to Masidi (Datuk Masidi Manjun, Tourism, Culture and Environment Minister) for successfully arguing the case to the cabinet," he told the Borneo Post yesterday.

He also said that the Sabah Forestry Department's American Association of Zoos 1984 planned for a global captive of Sumatran Rhinoceros breeding programme can now, at last, get underway.

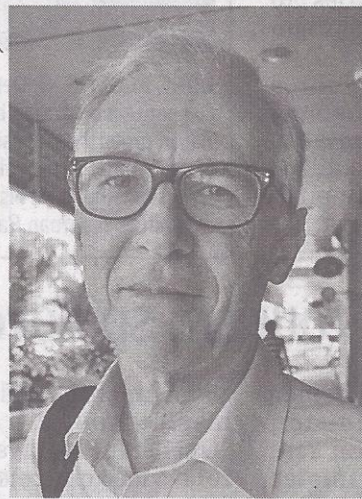
"Unfortunately we may now have only three rhinos left in Malaysia whereas in 1984 we had about 50 Sumatran Rhinoceros," he said.

Payne expressed his big hope now, following the decision by the State Cabinet, was that Indonesia, Malaysia, the USA and the Leibniz Institute for Zoo and Wildlife Research (IZW) can now work in sincere collaboration to prevent the extinction of one of the world's oldest living forms of mammals.

At the same time, Payne also updated the Borneo Post on efforts to capture the fertile female Sumatran Rhinoceros in Danum Valley.

"We are still trying to catch it. But it is not easy -- heavy rains, landslides, crossing rivers and having 30 leeches per hour of walking time," he said.

He added that there were 20 personnel from BORA, Wildlife Rescue Unit (WRU), Sabah Wildlife Department (SWD) and the Danum Valley Management Authority involved in the setting up of four traps in Danum



Payne

Valley.

"We have to capture her before July, this year, which is before Tam leaves for the USA," he explained.

There are two Sumatran Rhinoceros in captivity presently in Sabah -- the female, Puntung and male, Kretam (nicknamed "Tam").

On the fate of Puntung, Payne said she suffered from endometriosis and they would keep trying with periodic natural breeding and artificial insemination.