Malaysian Scientist Shares Experience in Antarctic Biological Research with UGM Students

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Antarctica is known as the world’s coldest remote continent, consisting mostly of frozen ground. This continent has been hiding unsolved mysteries about the planet Earth that captivate scientists to do research.

One of the researchers is Dr. Japareng Lalung from Universiti Sains Malaysia who had the opportunity to pursue a biological study in Antarctica from late 2015 to early 2016. “It was summer and the sun beamed for 24 hours with low humidity,” said Japareng, Thursday (8/2) at the Auditorium of UGM Faculty of Biology.

The environmental microbiology expert recounted his experience from an Antarctic research expedition in front of UGM Biology students and lecturers. He was selected as one of the researchers who were given the chance to conduct research in Antarctica organized by Sultan Mizan Antarctic Research Foundation (YPASM).

Japareng expressed that through the expedition he gained much experience and knowledge of Antarctica, both its organisms and ecosystems. Even so, doing research in the continent was
challenging due to the extreme cold weather as low as minus 40 degrees Celsius.

“Most of the land was covered in thick ice and everything looked the same,” he said.

The condition was an obstacle to researchers in taking samples in Antarctica.

Although the sampling location was predetermined, the researchers had difficulty finding it among the ice-covered land.

“Even with GPS, it was still difficult to locate the predetermined sample point. So, we had to do it manually with maps.”

However, all the obstacles were recompensed once they succeeded in locating and taking research samples. On this occasion, Japareng presented several samples that he managed to collect such as algae.

Dean of Biology UGM, Dr. Budi S. Daryono, M.Agr., said that Japareng’s presentation brings new insight for the faculty’s academic community, related to the experience of Antarctic biological studies. He hopes that students, researchers, lecturers, and alumni of Biology UGM can get the opportunity to study in Antarctica one day.

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