

MAHATHIR - FOREST
BM

KUALA LUMPUR, JUNE 11 (BERNAMA) -- THE 600-HECTARE AREA OF THE FORESTRY RESEARCH INSTITUTE AT KEPONG NEAR HERE WILL BE TURNED INTO AN AMENITY FOREST PARK.

THE PARK WILL HAVE NOT ONLY RECREATIONAL AND PICNIC FACILITIES BUT ALSO A MUSEUM AND EXHIBITION ON FORESTRY AND THE TIMBER INDUSTRY, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY.

THE PRIME MINISTER TOLD A PRESS CONFERENCE AFTER TOURING THE INSTITUTE AND ITS AREA THAT THE INSTITUTE HAD BEEN DIRECTED TO DRAW UP A REPORT RECOMMENDING THE FACILITIES AND REQUIREMENTS OF THE PROPOSED PARK.

HE SAID HE FOUND THE FOREST AREA ENVIRONMENT MOST AGREEABLE AND SUITABLE FOR A RECREATIONAL PARK.

HE FELT SUCH AN AMENITY WAS VITAL FOR THE GROWING POPULATION OF THE NATIONAL CAPITAL. -- MORE 1437/HM

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DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR BELIEVED THE PROPOSED AMENITY FOREST PARK WOULD BE AN ATTRACTION FOR NOT JUST LOCAL RESIDENTS BUT ALSO FOREIGN VISITORS WISHING TO HAVE A FIRST-HAND STUDY OF A NATURAL FOREST.

THEY WOULD HAVE NOT ONLY THE OPPORTUNITY TO GET A CLOSER LOOK AT THE TIMBER SPECIES AND FOREST RESOURCES AVAILABLE IN THE COUNTRY BUT ALSO FINISHED PRODUCTS MADE FROM WOOD.

HE SAID VISITORS TO THE PARK WOULD BE CHARGED A NOMINAL FEE TO HELP MEET THE EXPENSES FOR SETTING UP AND MAINTAINING THE PARK.

HE ADVISED VISITORS TO HELP KEEP THE AREA CLEAN AND COMPLY WITH REGULATIONS TO PREVENT UNDESIRABLE OCCURRENCES SUCH AS FIRES.

THE ACCESS ROAD TO THE INSTITUTE WOULD BE WIDENED AND UPGRADED WITH THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROJECT. -- MORE 1450/MB

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ON ACTIVITIES OF THE INSTITUTE, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID HE WAS IMPRESSED WITH THE INSTITUTE'S WORK IN DEVELOPING THE TIMBER INDUSTRY IN THE COUNTRY.

HE BELIEVED THE INSTITUTE WOULD BECOME MORE EFFECTIVE WHEN MADE A STATUTORY BODY SOON.

AN ACT FOR THE PURPOSE WAS BEING DRAFTED BY THE PRIMARY INDUSTRIES MINISTRY AND WOULD BE PRESENTED TO THE CABINET FOR CONSIDERATION BEFORE IT WAS TABLED IN PARLIAMENT.

HE STRESSED THAT MALAYSIA, AS THE WORLD'S LARGEST PRODUCER OF TROPICAL HARDWOOD, SHOULD GIVE PROPER ATTENTION TO TIMBER RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE INDUSTRY, INCLUDING IN THE FIELDS OF REAFFORESTATION AND UTILIZATION.

HE WAS PROUD OF THE INSTITUTE'S BREAKTHROUGH IN DEVELOPING USE OF OIL PALM TRUNKS FOR MAKING OF PARTICLE BOARDS. -- MORE

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HE PRAISED THE INSTITUTE FOR PROPERLY ORIENTING ITSELF TO APPLIED RESEARCH RATHER THAN ACADEMIC RESEARCH.

HE WAS SURE TIMBER INDUSTRY CIRCLES WOULD HELP FINANCE ITS RESEARCH WORK AS THEY THEMSELVES STOOD TO BENEFIT FROM THE FINDINGS. AT PRESENT THE INSTITUTE CHARGED A NOMINAL FEE FOR ANY RESEARCH WORK REQUIRED BY THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE GOVERNMENT WOULD TAKE IN MORE FOREIGN EXPERTS TO MEET THE INSTITUTE'S INCREASING RESEARCH BURDEN. TWO OF THE INSTITUTE'S 68 RESEARCH OFFICERS ARE FOREIGNERS.

EARLIER, HE WAS BRIEFED ON THE INSTITUTE'S ACTIVITIES BY PTD'S DEPUTY DIRECTOR, DR. SALLEH MOHAMAD NOOR.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR WAS TAKEN ON A TOUR OF THE FORESTRY MUSEUM, TIMBER EXHIBITION AND NURSERY. HE ALSO PLANTED A +MAGNILIA MALAYA+ SAPLING IN THE INSTITUTE COMPOUND AS COMMEMORATION OF HIS VISIT.

THE PRIME MINISTER WAS ACCOMPANIED BY PRIMARY INDUSTRIES MINISTER DATUK PAUL LEONG AND THE DEPUTY MINISTER BUJANG HAJI ULIS. ---BERNAMA