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PM : ENVIRONMENTALISTS SHOULD FIGHT FOREST FIRES

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 7 (Bernama) -- Malaysia feels that environmentalists in developed countries who have voluntarily staged demonstrations over environmental issues should help to check forest fires in this region.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the groups concerned should volunteer to curb forest fires as they had demonstrated over timber extraction.

+We must remember that we never invited people to demonstrate in Malaysia regarding our forest but they came.

+So if they are willing to volunteer in that way, they should also volunteer to send water bomber, clouds seeder and heavy equipment (to check forest fires) without any request, + he told a press conference after opening the 23rd Asean Economic Ministers Meeting here.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir was elaborating on his statement, made when opening the meeting, that forest fires had caused the haze affecting the region and brought more environmental damage than controlled extraction of timber. --

He also said environmental campaigns against developing countries had nothing to do with the environment but were mere extension of the +days of colonialism+ over developing countries.

+We're doing our best for the environment and I think we should get some recognition, + he added.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir also hoped that Asean would adopt a common stand against environmental campaigns at the Asean summit in Singapore next January.

-- Bernama