

Dr M: Stripping hills bare is not Govt's way

By K.Y. PUNG

TANAH RATA: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad is unhappy with certain state governments which allowed excessive cutting of trees and slopes during hill development.

The Prime Minister said these states had not complied with his earlier directives to avoid such methods to preserve the natural environment.

He said the Government had, in fact, directed that the location and size of trees in a project be marked and houses built around them.

"The old habit of construction is straight and terraced. They should follow the contours and terrains.

"Buildings built around trees actually look more aesthetic," he told reporters after launching the eight-day Cameron Highlands Flower Festival 1994 here.

Dr Mahathir said hill development needed proper planning to avoid excessive slope-cutting as the highlands were popular with foreign tourists.

He said some states had allowed loggers to strip hilltops bare and cut into hill slopes causing serious erosion.

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Be sensitive to nature, says Mahathir

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"Some hills have been completely flattened while others have been laid bare by the felling of too many trees," he said.

He said one state government had issued logging permits to fell trees on hilltops and logging operators were using trailers on narrow roads.

He said developers should emulate the example of the Pangkor Laut Resort and Pulau Langkawi where Berjaya had constructed buildings and roads by following the natural contours.

Dr Mahathir said he was satisfied with the Pahang government for maintaining a balance between development and

the environment.

In his speech, he said the people should pool their resources to set up corporations to cultivate flowers using sophisticated equipment.

He said more capital could be raised through such corporations to venture into large-scale cultivation.

Dr Mahathir said the

people should be proud that Malaysia was endowed with hills where temperate flowers could be grown.

Later, Dr Mahathir presented prizes to winners of the floral floats.

The Cameron Highland Flower Growers Association's float bagged the first prize and cash RM7,000.