

12/05/1997

Cut down in the name of development

Suryani Dalip

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - Despite the constant appeal by the Government including Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for trees affected by development to be preserved by transplanting them to a new site, local authorities and private sector developers continue to choose the easier way - chop the trees down.

This is what is happening to a row of mature and fruit-bearing coconut palms along Jalan Subang Utama in SS15, Subang Jaya, in Selangor.

Ten of the trees, which are more than 10 years old, were put to the chainsaw today by workers of Lai Sing-Mudajaya-Bridgecon-LPS Binamaju the contractors for Maxtro Engineering Sdn Bhd that is the concession holder for the road project.

An official from LMBB, who declined to be identified, said the consortium obtained permission from the Subang Jaya Municipal Council last week to chop the trees to make way for the 19.6km highway which will be an alternative exit for traffic from Subang Jaya.

Dr Mahathir, when launching the national tree planting campaign in early March, had urged States and local authorities to take landscaping seriously and make it mandatory in all development projects.

He had also asked them to have reserve land for landscaping purposes on roadsides.

This move will eliminate the damage to trees especially where there are road widening works.

Even prior to this, the Prime Minister and the Cabinet have on numerous occasions stressed the need for tree cutting to be minimised for development.

The LMBB official said the coconut trees will be replaced with palm trees which are easier to maintain, but at a site to be allocated by MPSJ.

"We have in store 121 palm trees to be planted on the site."

The official claimed the coconut trees also posed a danger to passing motorists and there had been several incidents where the ripe coconuts and the leaves fell onto the street, sometimes narrowly missing a passing vehicle.

He said other trees that do not pose a danger to the traffic will be planted on the allocated site after the completion of the highway.

The RM600 million highway will begin from Jalan Jengka roundabout in Subang Jaya and end at Jalan Bangsar.

Work commenced in March and is expected to be completed by end of 1999. There will be seven interchanges at Jalan Kewajipan, Jalan PJS8/1, Taman Maju Jaya, Jalan Templer, Pantai Dalam, Taman Desa and Jalan Pantai Baru.

The work will be upgraded to three lanes on both sides. There will be three flyovers at Jalan Kewajipan, Taman Maju Jaya and Jalan Templer and an underpass at Jalan PJS 8/1.

(END)