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Mahathir-Environment

PRESERVE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT, DR MAHATHIR TELLS PEOPLE

JERANTUT, March 18 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad wants the people to preserve the natural environment because it is the country's major asset which can increase their income.

"How we make use of it is very important as it will determine whether we will be rich or poor," he said at the meet-the-people session at Sekolah Kebangsaan Kuala Tahan, here today.

He said the nature is God's gift and the people must exercise care in its exploitation so as not to jeopardise its beauty.

The government encourages tourism because it generates incomes at all times, he said.

Dr Mahathir said that if the natural environment is not preserved, tourists will not come and the people's incomes will not increase.

He said the government wants to help the people to increase their incomes but they must take the efforts to better themselves.

"We want more secondary class especially the Bumiputera. That is why the people must take the efforts as the government can only show the way," he said, adding that some people did not take advantage of the opportunities provided.

Dr Mahathir cited as example the Felda scheme in Perlis where the settlers engaged others to tap rubber trees and eventually the land would belong to the hired workers.

The government provided them opportunities to make money and they wasted it, he said.

On his visit to the National Park, Dr Mahathir said he is satisfied with the development in the area which has changed much since his last visit 11 years ago.

He said the influx of tourists have increased the incomes of the local people and there are now five floating restaurants in the National Park. --

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ARA ABG