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Sowing the seeds of a truly green Malaysian nation

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PRIME MINISTER Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today launches a nationwide tree planting campaign at the Medan Idaman Recreational Park in Gombak.

The launch will mark the start of planting some three million trees by 2000.

The tree planting ceremony in Kuala Lumpur today will also kick off the programme at the State and district-levels.

The Green the Nation programme, which will help the country achieve a "nation in a garden image" by 2005, is most appropriate and should be supported fully by all Malaysians.

The Housing and Local Government Ministry's Landscape Department has recommended that at least 10 types of trees be planted and should be complimented for its efforts in the nation-greening campaign.

The Ministry has allocated some RM200 million under the Seventh Malaysia Plan for landscaping and greening the nation.

Non-governmental organisations such as the Malaysian Nature Society must also be complimented for their very positive role in ensuring the success of the programme.

But the Government and all local authorities should continue to go on nationwide publicity campaigns.

They must appeal to all agencies, housing developers, schools, NGOs as well as house owners to participate in the programme.

To meet the target of 20 million trees by 2020, all Malaysians must play their part.

Housing developers can plant more trees and provide multi-coloured plants and flowers.

For housing estates which have been completed and occupied, suitable places can be identified for tree planting.

Rotary and Lion clubs can organise tree-planting programmes for cities and towns as part of their community projects.

In this connection, I would like to congratulate the Rotary Club of Kuala Lumpur for its plan to plant 100 trees on a site to be identified by Kuala Lumpur City Hall.

The project costing RM10,000 will also involve 30 Rotaractors (young adults between the ages of 21-29 years old) and 10 Interact Clubs in Kuala Lumpur.

Local authorities should help identify suitable areas for planting trees and flowering plants.

The Forest Research Institute of Malaysia can donate suitable trees for individuals to plant within their house compounds.

All local authorities must also be provided with adequate funds for their tree maintenance programme so that the trees will not pose a danger to the public.

Trees should be pruned regularly so their branches will not pose problems to residential and public areas, more so because of our weather conditions.

Owners of commercial and office buildings must also be held responsible for proper landscaping.

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