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PM impressed with wetlands rehab

KUALA LANGAT, Sun. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad visited Paya Indah, the Malaysian Wetlands Sanctuary here yesterday, saying that he was very impressed with on-going work to rehabilitate the peat swamp forest.

Dr Mahathir was taken on a four-wheel-drive tour of the wetlands accompanied by Malaysian Wetlands Foundation chief executive officer Muralee Menon and other officials.

The tour started with a short on-site briefing before he visited the lakes which were undergoing rehabilitation work after months of sand and clay mining.

He also walked along several trails alongside canals dug by loggers to transport logs.

Once the canals have been fully rehabilitated, the foundation plans to introduce canoe rides.

The Prime Minister was also shown the various features of the sanctuary such as a newly constructed boardwalk and the peat forests.

Dr Mahathir also managed to witness the rich birdlife of the area. These birds had returned to the sanctuary after the rehabilitation work began in earnest a few months ago.

Throughout the visit, Dr Mahathir offered suggestions on how the place could be made into a model environment-rich tourist attraction.

His suggestions included planting more shady trees to make the sanctuary more visitor-friendly.

The sanctuary covers 3,200ha with plans for a research and development centre in wetlands conservation and ecology, an information centre, a restaurant, some recreational infrastructure and training facilities.

Also accompanying the Prime Minister were the Finance Ministry's Parliamentary Secretary Datuk Dr Shafie Mohd Salleh, Selangor Agriculture, Fisheries, Research and Development Committee chairman Datuk Abdul Fatah Iskandar and Teluk Datuk State Assemblyman Ei Kim Hock.

Kuala Langat district officer Mohd Yusop Mat Judin and Selangor Land and Mines director Datuk Mohd Esa Shariff were also present.

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