

# Love our rivers, says Mahathir

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They should be protected as a  
source of drinking water

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**ALOR STAR, Fri:** Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad called on Malaysians today to care for rivers as they are the source of life.

The Prime Minister said rivers should be protected to ensure there is ample water supply while making the most of their potential through tourism.

Launching the national level *Love Our Rivers* campaign at Ampangan Jajar here, he said Malaysians should be thankful to have rivers which provide water for drinking and agriculture purposes compared with other countries which have only dried-up rivers.

He said Malaysians should not use rivers as a place to dump garbage and toxic wastes which will pollute them.

"In earlier days, disused items thrown into rivers were easily degradable but now we have garbage such as plastic bags and bottles, which will take a long time to decompose," he said.

Branding river polluters as a bunch of people unappreciative of a God-given heritage, Mahathir said rivers became polluted because man did not love a gift of God.

He said the government, through the Culture, Arts and Tourism Ministry will promote rivers in Malaysia as tourist destinations.

He said a bridge built across the river could be made with a curve to enable boats or vessels to move under it.

"The private sector can also promote sailing and other water sports for youths to be conducted in the river," he said.

Earlier, accompanied by his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, Agriculture Minister Datuk Dr Mohamed Affendi Norwawi, Science, Technology and Environment Minister Datuk Law Hieng Ding and Kedah Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Syed Razak Syed Zain, he took a ride on the boat *Bahtera Perdana* from Tanjong Chali here to the function.

The vessel sailed for 20 minutes along the Kedah river accompanied by a 50-boat flotilla.