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Mahathir-Rivers

MAHATHIR BRANDS RIVER POLLUTERS AS DESTROYERS OF GOD'S GIFT

ALOR SETAR, Nov 10 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has branded river polluters as a bunch of people unappreciative of a God-given heritage.

"Rivers become dirty because man does not love a gift of God," he said.

In the earlier days, diused items thrown into rivers were easily degradable but rivers are now filled with non-perishable items such as plastic wrappers, he said when launching the national-level "love our rivers" campaign at Ampang Jajar here today.

The government wished for society to be highly civilised by keeping rivers constantly clean, he said.

Rivers, he said, remained crucial as a source of drinking water and for irrigation, transport and tourism.

"We must look after rivers like we take care of our lovers. Make sure rivers are always beautiful," he said.

He lamented that it was unfortunate that society discarded all sorts of things into rivers, including old refrigerators, old cars and even dead bodies.

In the past the community used to love rivers which supplied them with water and a mode of transportation, he said.

Now, with the availability of alternative transportation, they valued rivers less and treated them as litter bins, he said.

"Rivers are the source of our life. We should protect them to ensure there is ample water supply while making the most of their tourism potentials," he said.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir, accompanied by wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, Agriculture Minister Datuk Dr Mohamed Effendi Norwawi, Science, Technology and Environment Minister Datuk Law Hieng Ding and Kedah Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Syed Razak Syed Zain 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.

The "love our rivers" campaign was launched in 1993 and the current drive sought to secure pledges from government departments, companies, non-governmental organisations and schools to look after rivers.

The organisers had received 450 pledges of support for the campaign, including for implementing river landscaping and rubbish-trap programmes and an adopt-a-river scheme.

-- BERNAMA

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