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PM leads thousands in tree planting

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today led thousands of Malaysians in a "New Millennium Tree Planting" event towards making Malaysia a garden nation.

The organisers have targeted for a total of 100,000 trees to be planted simultaneously within one minute throughout the country, a feat which would make the Malaysia Book of Records.

Dr Mahathir participated in the event at Taman Bukit Jalil by planting a "kapur" (*dryobalanops aromatica*) tree at 9.35am.

A total of 330 trees were planted at the park which was earlier officially opened by the Prime Minister in conjunction with the event that was telecast live by Radio Televisyen Malaysia.

Also present were Housing and Local Government Minister Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting, Cabinet Ministers, Deputy Ministers, Datuk Bandar Kuala Lumpur Tan Sri Kamaruzzaman Shariff and Landscape Department director-general Datuk Ismail Ngah.

Dr Mahathir launched a tree-planting campaign in 1997, with a target of having three million trees planted by this year and 20 million by 2020.

Until last June, 2,387,725 trees or 80 per cent of the target had been planted.

In Bandar Sri Damansara, Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, who is the chairman of the Association of Wives of Ministers and Deputy Ministers (Bakti), led a similar campaign at the Kompleks Penyayang Bakti.

She was joined by the wives of Ministers and Deputy Ministers, together with hundreds of volunteers and invited guests. They planted 105 trees in the compound of the complex.

Dr Siti Hasmah, in her speech, said in efforts to "green" the environment, the involvement of the members of the public was important.

"Activities can be organised to enhance awareness on the importance of preserving the environment among schoolchildren, youths and adults," she said.

In Terengganu, department heads, schoolchildren and the public planted 3,300 trees in the State.

In Kota Kinabalu, Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Seri Osu Sukam led 100 local dignitaries in planting trees at the Pasir Putih community hall compound in Putatan, near here.

Tree planting was also carried out in all the districts in the State with a total of 9,000 trees of various species planted.

In Sarawak, Minister of Environment and Public Health Datuk Amar James Wong Kim Min launched the State-level campaign at the Kuching South City Council.

Some 9,000 trees were planted within one minute by some 30,000 people.

In Kota Baru, 1,000 trees were planted at seven locations in the Kemubu Agricultural Development Authority areas by its officers.

The trees planted are from the tanjung, merawan siput jantan, red flame, salam and tecoma pallida species.

In Malacca, Chief Minister Datuk Wira Mohd Ali Rustam led his State Exco, Assemblymen and representatives from private companies and the public in planting 1,800 casuarina equisetiplisia at Pantai Puteri which was formerly known as Pantai Kundur.

In Kuantan, the public responded favourably to the campaign with around 900 people turning up at various designated spots to plant forest tree

saplings.

Under the project, Pahang has been asked to plant 6,000 trees. Of these, 3,500 are merawan siput jantan and the rest from species like medang teja and kelat paya.

At the Kuantan Municipal Council ground in Jalan Kemunting, Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Adnan Yaakob led about 200 people in planting merawan siput jantan saplings.

In Penang, Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon and about 300 people simultaneously planted 131 tecoma penthaphylla saplings at an open ground in Bandar Baru Air Itam.

A total of 8,208 saplings were planted at 92 locations.

In Rawang, Selangor, some 600 people gathered to plant 496 trees in the township of Taman Desa.

The project centred around Sekolah Kebangsaan Taman Desa, where some 104 trees were planted by students, teachers and parents.

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