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Mahathir-Wetlands

PAYA INDAH WETLANDS A GIFT TO THE NATION, SAYS PM

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 13 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad described the Paya Indah Wetlands as a gift to the nation by the government and called on the younger generation to learn from the spectacular flora and fauna there.

"I hope Paya Indah will be an educational part for the younger generation to shape their personality in an era of modern and sophisticated technology," he said when opening Malaysia's premier eco-tourism park covering 3,100 hectares in Kuala Langat near here today.

Dr Mahathir hoped the younger generation would learn to love the environment and for the future generation to enjoy such facilities with a hope to improve their quality of life.

He said although the government had brought tremendous developments to the country, the younger generation believed what they were seeing today had been there before.

"A lot of them are of the opinion that what had been done all this while was there before," he said.

Dr Mahathir said although Paya Indah Wetlands is situated close to the Kuala Lumpur International Airport (KLIA), Putrajaya and Cyberjaya, the wetlands belongs to all.

He called on visitors to keep the wetlands clean so that others could enjoy the environment, describing it as a place to view the beauty of nature.

Dr Mahathir also said that the wetlands was an ideal place for family picnics and the young generation to have activities such as horse riding, roving, canoeing, mountain biking, cycling and sailing.

For instance, he said, the wetlands was the cheapest place in the world for horse riding while it would cost a fortune in other countries.

Dr Mahathir also said the wetlands was inhabited by rare species, among others a two-metre long fish from Amazon, ducks from Moscow and four hippopotamus from Bostwana.

The four hippopotamus were gifts from the Bostwana government and Telekom Malaysia Bhd presented a cheque for RM750,000 for the upkeeping of the mammals for three years.

Telekom Malaysia chairman Datuk Ir Mohamed Radzi Mansor presented the cheque to Dr Mahathir while businessman Chua May Yoon made the single largest contribution of RM1 million.

Payah Indah Wetlands, managed by the Malaysian Wetlands Foundation, is located about 50km from the city. It has 14 lakes and most of them are ex-tin mining pools with approximately 43 million litres of water.

The government has given a RM33.4 million loan to the foundation to finance the wetlands sanctuary.

The foundation's chairman, Tan Sri Razali Ismail, earlier in his speech said they took four years to materialise what is now called Payah Indah Wetlands, which is right in the prime area for development.

Thanking the government and Dr Mahathir, he said the wetlands could supply treated water for Kuala Lumpur and Selangor if the situation arises.

The wetlands is open to the public from 8.30am to 7.30pm on weekdays and from 7.30am to 7.30pm on public holidays and weekends. The place is closed on Monday except public holidays.

The entrance rates during weekdays are RM5 for adult and RM3 for children between three and 12.

However, the rates for public holidays and weekends are RM7 (adult) and RM4 for children (3-12 years).

The wetlands has a capacity to accommodate 1,300 vistors per day and is projected to receive over 200,000 visitors in the first year.

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