

Go live in forest, PM tells critics of water project

MANAMA (Bahrain): Members of non-governmental organisations who oppose the East-West water project in Malaysia should go live in the forest and preserve the environment, said Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The Prime Minister said such people used the water sourced from these forests but opposed the dam projects needed to provide the water supply.

Citing the RM19bil Great Man-Made River Project in Benghazi, Libya, he said the massive project was carried out for the people, who needed water badly.

"It is easy for our NGOs to oppose such projects. But they want the water. It is simple if they don't want the project to be implemented, we shouldn't give them any water.

"We don't simply destroy the forests. If you don't want to destroy the forest, go and live in the forest," Dr Mahathir told Malaysian journalists on Saturday after a two-day visit to Libya.

He added: "God has given us water and we are blessed with it. You just look at the Libyans, it is so difficult for them to get water. But we have water and there are people stopping us from producing more.

"But when these people want water to bathe, they use tens of gallons of water and call themselves NGOs. Then they take orders from foreigners," he said.

The East-West water project, which has been delayed because of funding, was to supply water from Pahang to Selangor.

Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu has said that the Japanese Government was willing to provide a RM3bil loan but wanted at least five Malaysian NGOs to agree to the project.

But local NGOs oppose the project, which they say would have adverse effects on the environment and ecological balance.