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Mahathir-Wetlands/BM (Pix)

DR M HAPPY WITH DEVELOPMENT OF PAYA INDAH WETLANDS

DENGKIL, Oct 13 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has expressed satisfaction with the level of development at the Paya Indah Wetlands recreational area.

He said things had improved a lot since development started one-and-a-half years ago.

"Well, it's much better now than when we started. Previously there were no trees, hot...only bushes. But now they've planted a lot of trees; it's much neater, the water bodies are looking fine," he said.

He told a news conference this after handing over an E-Tram from Tenaga Nasional Bhd (TNB) to the park management here today.

Also present were Science, Technology and Environment Minister Datuk Seri Law Hieng Ding, TNB chairman Datuk Dr Jamaluddin Jarjis and Paya Indah Wetlands chief operation officer Muralee Menon.

E-Tram, produced based on TNB research, is a Zero Emission Vehicle (ZEV) which is environment-friendly.

The E-Tram, which can carry 30 people, will be used to ferry visitors around the park to view its beauty.

Dr Mahathir also witnessed the handing over of a pair of Manchurian cranes which is a gift from the Chinese government to Malaysia.

Chinese Ambassador to Malaysia Hu Zheng Yue handed over the red-crowned cranes to Law.

Asked whether the government intended to further develop the sanctuary, Dr Mahathir said there were many proposals on its development.

"There are all kinds of proposals, but the private sector too needs to help finance it (development)," he said.

Asked on the proposal to move Zoo Negara in Hulu Klang to the Paya Indah Wetlands, Dr Mahathir said the government had not made a final decision on the matter.

"We would like to have the zoo here. There is enough land and it is quite suitable. The cost is very high which (is why) we can't afford to have two zoos," he said.

The Paya Indah Wetlands sanctuary is a 3,100ha former tin-mining area which has been developed into an eco-tourism centre with minimal infrastructure in order to preserve its eco-system balance.

It now has 210 species of birds, 35 species of mammals, 19 species of fish and more than 220 species of water plants.

-- BERNAMA

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