

04/03/2002

Great response to local ideas

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - Public support for Government proposals have not only ensured their success locally, but enabled such ideas to draw international support, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said it was good to see that proposals made by the Government had received overwhelming response.

Citing an example, Dr Mahathir said a small aircraft show in Langkawi had become so big with exhibitors from all over the world.

"The same was when we proposed to have a bicycle race around Langkawi, which was called Le Tour de Langkawi. It became so big that it involved a race around the whole country over 10 days.

"When we proposed that Kuala Lumpur become a garden city, it was meant for Kuala Lumpur only, but the proposal grew to Malaysia as a garden country," he said.

Dr Mahathir said this in his speech to launch the National Landscape Day 2002 with the theme "Beautiful Country Healthy Nation" at the Kuala Lumpur City Centre Esplanade here.

Also present were Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Housing and Local Government Minister Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting and Kuala Lumpur Datuk Bandar Datuk Mohamad Shaidd Mohd Taufek.

"We should be grateful that in Malaysia proposals by the Government get overwhelming response from the people. Such reception can only bring benefits to us."

Dr Mahathir said Malaysians lived in an era of rapid development where some did not appreciate the natural beauty of the land.

"Many times those who build do not take into account the beauty of the surroundings. They rather level the land so that hills disappear and we see just flat land that is not attractive at all."

However, Dr Mahathir said there was now realisation of the need to have landscaping to beautify development projects.

"Today, thank God, we have efforts everywhere to beautify all developed areas by the people, the private sector and the Government. All this makes our country very colourful," he said.

Dr Mahathir said when surroundings were beautiful, people were also less likely to litter.

He said the country had succeeded in "re-greening" with its tree-planting campaign.

"This campaign was successful in entering the Guinness Book of Records for planting more than 110,000 trees in one minute. I am proud that one of the trees was planted by me and another by my wife."

He said businesses could be set up for those interested in beautifying and landscaping areas as there was a desire to live in a garden setting.

Dr Mahathir said many people who had been abroad were taken in by the beauty of not only Kuala Lumpur, but other towns and cities nationwide.

"I hope all housing projects will build parks for the use of residents and others. Not only will these parks be places for recreation, but the value of the projects too will increase."

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