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Mahathir-Camerons

PM DEPLORES INDISCRIMINATE DEVELOPMENT IN CAMERON HIGHLANDS

PUTRAJAYA, Feb 4 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has deplored the indiscriminate development in Cameron Highlands where scant regard has been given to environmental factors, adversely affecting its natural beauty.

He regretted that some areas had been flattened to the extent that the highlands now appear to be just like in the lowlands.

He said that the current development in Cameron Highlands would certainly affect the temperature there.

"This is the manner that some unscrupulous people resort to for huge profits. They give scant regard to the environment and are prepared to turn the highlands into lowlands, robbing them of their natural beauty," he said at the simultaneous launching of the second anniversary of the Putrajaya Federal Territory and the Botanical Gardens, another of Putrajaya's attractions.

Dr Mahathir said that he fails to understand why developers seek the highlands to implement projects but end up having to demolish the contour of the hilly terrain.

A newspaper reported on Friday that a group of companies was illegally using heavy machinery to clear land in an area which is formerly part of the Blue Valley Tea Plantation in Cameron Highlands.

This is despite being issued two stop-work orders by the Cameron Highlands District Council.

A police report has been lodged against the parties by an employee of the State Land and Mines Department on Sunday.

Dr Mahathir said that developers implementing projects on highlands should maintain the contour and the landscape of the area under development.

Referring to the development in Putrajaya, he said that the 4,500-ha site, formerly an oil palm estate, still maintained its greenery which was enhanced following the construction of lakes and gardens in the vicinity.

Clearly, he said, Putrajaya, the federal government administrative centre, had been developed with great care to preserve and maintain the landscape and environment.

"The price of the land here will increase because a big area has been turned into lakes and gardens. We should be prepared to pay a little bit more for its beauty," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that even though Putrajaya was still under construction, it does not appear like a construction site but like a big town which has matured.

Some 30,000 people including Dr Mahathir, his deputy, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, and government officers and staff now live here.

Dr Mahathir also hoped that the 4.5-km boulevard from the Prime Minister's Department to the conference centre could be completed this year for the National Day parade to be held there on Aug 31.

He was confident that the boulevard would create a new feature for the country to be identified, like the Champs Elysees in Paris.

Among those present were Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamed Ali, cabinet ministers, deputy ministers, senior government officials, corporate figures and community leaders.

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