Unit Komunikasi Korporat

KERATAN AKHBAR

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Perlis Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Azlan Man (sixth from left) with TNB's Grid Officer Datuk Ir Husaini Husin (seventh from left) and other guests during the mangrove planting programme.

Protecting mangrove swamps in Pulau Ketam

MOHD NOOR ASWAD
KUALA PERLIS

MALAYSIANS are becoming more aware about the importance of the environment.

Recently more than 200 villagers from Kampung Seberang Alor and Kampung Tengah in Pulau Ketam, Perlis planted more than 1,000 mangrove trees as part of the Mangrove Tree Planting Programme in Pulau Ketam near here.

They were joined by more than 200 volunteers from Malaysia Nature Society and local universities in the state, namely Universiti Teknologi MARA and Universiti Malaysia Perlis.

The 1,000 mangrove trees for the Mangrove Tree Planting Programme were a joint effort organised by Tenaga Nasional Berhad (TNB), Perlis state government, the state Forestry Department and Malaysian Nature Society.

Pulau Ketam in a small island connected to the mainland of Kuala Perlis. There are traditional fishing villages scattered across the island.

The fishermen's livelihood depends on the sea conditions of the Straits of Malacca. With heavy winds and rough seas, sometimes plowing into the shores of the island, it is important that the villagers feel safe.

The tsunami incident in Aceh in 2004, impacted the coastal population here. Thankfully, the coastal areas of Pulau Ketam is ripe for the planting of mangroves, which protect shorelines from storms, strong winds, waves, floods and even tsunamis.

Mangroves also help prevent erosion by stabilising sediments with their tangled root systems. They also maintain water quality and clarity, filtering pollutants and trapping sediments originating from land.

Hashimi Ibrahim, 57, a villager who has lived all her life on Pulau Ketam, understands the importance of the mangrove trees.

This is why she and her neighbours were at the shores to plant more trees because they are the best natural protection.

"The mangrove trees are good because they protect our shores from rough seas and strong winds. After the tsunami in 2004, we wanted to be proactive in planting these trees because they can help protect our shores and our villages.

"Our village community gets ample information on these from nature NGOs and the Forestry department. When we get the information, we share them with our children and neighbours," she said.

Mangrove trees also bring in fish and crabs closer to the shores, which offers bounty for local fishermen.

Kalsom Napi, 56, says that the mangrove trees indirectly helps create an extra source of income.

"These mangrove trees attract lots of fish and crabs. As you know the island is called Pulau Ketam so there's a huge bounty of crabs here underneath the mangrove trees.

"The mangroves also acts as fish nurseries. It is a natural gift from God, to provide us with these food sources and also to help us sell in the markets. This is why I am here for the mangrove planting programme," she said.

TNB's Grid Officer Datuk Ir Husaini Husin said the programme is part of the company's corporate responsibility to give back to the community through environmental activities such as mangrove tree planting.

"After we realised the importance of the mangroves, we feel that we can play our part in helping make the shores of our country stronger as these trees do so much for the nutrients in the land which is important for the ecosystem.

"TNB has plans to plant 10,000 mangrove trees along the shores of Peninsular Malaysia," he said.

Students who came to the programme applauded TNB and the Perlis state government for taking a serious focus on the environment.

University student Nurnadiah Nasir, 22, said she wanted to do her part for the environment.

"We have seen the devastating impact of the Aceh Tsunami and we all understand that we do something about it.

"We shouldn't wait for a tragedy to occur before we start acting on it. We must make the effort to be proactive to protect the environment," she said.

Asyikin Razaman, 22, said that it was good that a corporate body like TNB and the state government worked together to help protect the environment.

"Protecting the environment is important. We try to do our best in our daily lives to be environmentally conscious but we don't have the money to do much.

"When big companies and those in power also take the issue of environment as important, it really impresses me," she said.

She hopes that more companies will follow the footsteps of TNB and do more to protect the environment.



The volunteers, villagers and students helping to plant the mangrove trees during the Mangrove Tree Planting Programme.



"Mangrove trees are important for the environment. They offer the best natural protection for the shores from rough seas and strong winds".

HASHIMI IBRAHIM



"The mangrove trees attract fish and crabs which helps create an extra source of income".

KALSOM NAPI



"We must make the effort to be proactive to protect the environment."

NURNADIAH NASIR



"I am happy to see a corporate body like TNB and the state government work together to help protect the environment."

ASYIKIN RAZAMAN