



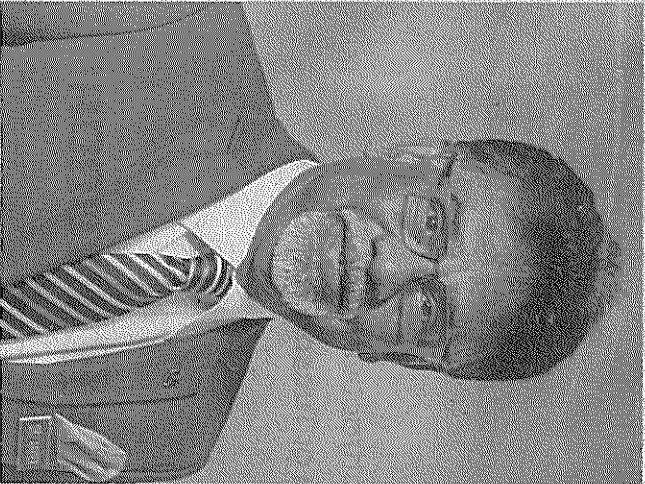
KERATAN AKHBAR

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MALAYSIA A SHOWCASE OF FOREST PRESERVATION

PETALING JAYA: More than half of the land area in the country remains covered by forests despite rapid development in the past, and the government is committed to the continued preservation of our rainforests' rich biodiversity.

Water, Land and Natural Resources Minister Dr A. Xavier Jayakumar said 55.3 per cent of the land area in Malaysia, or 18.28 million ha is now covered by forests. This exceeds the 50 per cent pledge Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad made during the Rio Earth Summit in 1992.



SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT: Dr Jayakumar is confident that at least 50% of Malaysia's land area will continue to be covered by forests.

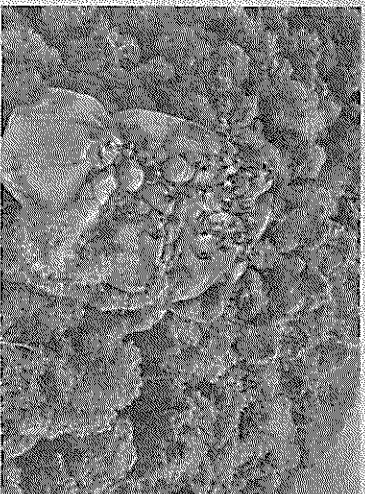


CHAMANG WATERFALL

"Our success in combining development and environmental needs help ensure that we do not destroy our rich fauna and flora, especially in our rainforests, which is one of the oldest in the world," Dr Jayakumar told The Star.

He also rubbished accusations from foreign campaigns accusing Malaysia of rapid deforestation linked to palm oil plantations. Describing such campaigns as "misguided", Dr Jayakumar said the palm oil industry had been developed sustainably to avoid the destruction of forests and wildlife habitats.

Among others, the Government had imposed restrictions on the planting of oil palm on peatland as well as



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Permanent Forests Reserves. Efforts to enhance yield instead of expanding land had also seen significant results.

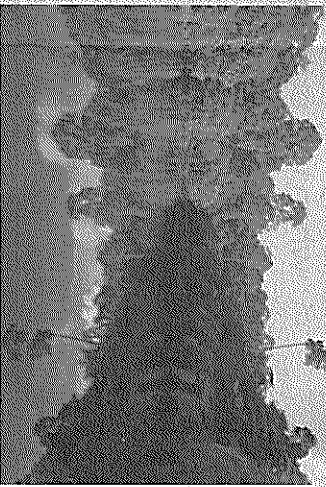
He added that the Government will step up efforts to enhance sustainable

forests management and mainstreaming biodiversity in Malaysia's socio-economic development agenda, post-2020.

This includes increasing the Totally Protected Areas from 13.2 per cent to 20 per cent by 2025 as set out in the National Policy on Biological Diversity. Another is the five-year, 100 million tree planting campaign.

The Ministry is also organising a *Hutan Kita - Journey Through Our Rainforest* exhibition to enhance public awareness about the Government's efforts in preserving our forests. To be opened to the public from 24 Aug for one month, it will be held at the KL Tower.

The exhibition will be launched by Dr Mahathir this Friday and will showcase the country's rich biodiversity in the forests as well as efforts made to preserve this natural heritage. Admission is free.



RICH BIODIVERSITY: Our rainforests are among the oldest in the world. - Forestry Department Peninsular Malaysia