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'New system is being tested'

Dr M: If successful, sewage treatment tech will be used nationwide

LANGKAWI: Sewage treatment plants in the country are expected to adopt a new form of technology that is far more efficient, cleaner and cheaper if a pilot project to treat waste water now being implemented in Langkawi proves effective.

Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the "Advanced Moving Bed Bio-Reactor" (AMBBR) technology was being tested at the sewage treatment plant in Pantai Tengah and would undergo two years of trials before it was introduced to other plants.

"We have been facing water purity problem, whether in shops or households wherever they may be. We now have a new Malaysian-owned system, which processes waste water and completely clears it of sediments.

"We have discovered this system. We now have treatment plants with large pools and they are very costly. We will test this new system for two years, and if successful, it will replace the system used currently to treat waste water," he told reporters after a visit to the plant in Pantai Tengah here to look at the implementation of the new technology.

The Prime Minister said this new treatment technology was extremely important to ensure waste water was treated in the best possible way or otherwise it could end up polluting the beaches and sea.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Langkawi MP, said this particular technology was the first of its kind in Malaysia, and if it produced an excellent success rate, the technology could be sold to other interested nations as well.

The RM16.5mil AMBBR pilot project is being undertaken by Kyoto



All ears: Dr Mahathir listening to Water, Land and Natural Resources Minister Dr Xavier Jayakumar (third from left) during a visit to the AMBBR plant in Pantai Tengah, Langkawi. — Bernama

Water Sdn Bhd, he said.

The project, which was completed in 2018, is now in its defect liability period (DLP) before it is expected to be handed over to Indah Water Konsortium Sdn Bhd in June.

Meanwhile, asked on whether there was sufficient water supply in Langkawi, Dr Mahathir said supply was sourced from Perlis on the mainland via a dedicated pipeline.

He said the use of fishing nets had damaged the pipeline, causing disruptions to the supply.

"We found we lost a lot of water at sea via the Perlis-Langkawi pipe-

line because the fishing nets dragged and damaged these pipes. To resolve this, we have to plant the pipes in the seabed," he said.

He said Langkawi's groundwater could also be used as an option, in the process cutting dependence on the pipeline supply from the mainland.

Commenting on the move to reduce the toll rate by 18% on several highways under Projek Lebuh raya Utara-Selatan (PLUS), Dr Mahathir said it would not affect the concessionaire financially, especially when it comes to mainte-

nance of the highways.

"PLUS has stated that with the 18% (toll rate) reduction, and without any hikes in the next 38 years, it can earn enough to maintain its highways. We believe traffic volume in the years to come could increase and this would add to Khazanah's revenue aside from other sources of income such as advertisement space and so on," he said.

Khazanah Nasional Bhd owns a 51% stake in PLUS while the Employees Provident Fund (EPF) holds the remaining 49%. — Bernama