



KERATAN AKHBAR

SURAT KHABAR	:	NEW STRAITS TIMES		
TARIKH	:	5/9/2019	MUKA SURAT	: 60
JABATAN	:	KATS / JPSM		
KLASIFIKASI	:	PERHATIAN		

NATIONAL TREE

MERBAU A SYMBOL OF UNITY

RECENTLY, the merbau was selected as our national tree. The choice is a wise one. The merbau is found all over the country, including in Sabah and Sarawak. It is hardwood and stands tall and majestic.

Merbau is an indigenous rain-forest tree and can grow up to 50m tall, with pinkish-grey bark that is shallowly marked with small, thin, roundish scaling pieces.

The trees grow in coastal regions and lowland forests, up to 850m in altitude.

They are native to Malaysia, Singapore, Borneo, Sumatra, Thailand and India.

The announcement on the national tree, on the eve of the 62nd Merdeka celebration, comes with psychological importance.

It reinforces national unity at a time when there are efforts to undermine it.

From a nation-building perspective, merbau serves as a reminder that sustainable development is possible.

Forest-clearing for development can be done if we uphold good environmental practices, as what we had done in the past 62 years.

Having a national tree elevates our environmental awareness and the importance of sustainable development.

It instils a sense of pride in the people of our many flora and fauna.

At 130 million years old, our rainforests are one of the oldest in the world.

Some questioned how the tree was selected and suggested it should have been based on votes.

The truth is that, unlike flowers, or logos for Visit Malaysia Year 2020, Malaysians know very little about tree species, especially those in jungles.

Malaysians, therefore, should visit the Hutan Kita exhibition at Menara KL until Sept 22. Entrance is free.

Last weekend, I took my grandchildren, who, like many Malaysians of their age, had little idea of what Malaysian forests



The merbau serves as a reminder that sustainable development is possible. FILE PIC

look like.

It was an eye-opening experience for them as they were exposed for the first time to our rich natural heritage.

In the spirit of Merdeka, visit the Hutan Kita exhibition.

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