



KERATAN AKHBAR

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Merbau good choice as national tree

I REFER to the letter "Conflicting views on Malaysia's national tree" (*The Star*, Sept 2).

The selection of merbau as the national tree is indeed a wise one. Merbau, which is found all over the country, is a hardwood and stands tall and majestic in its natural environment.

The selection of this tree on the eve of our 62nd National Day celebration comes with psychological importance. It lends an element of strength and reinforces our national unity in our collective psyche at a time when there are efforts to undermine our integrity.

From the nation-building perspective, merbau serves as a reminder that sustainable development is possible. Forest clearing for development's sake can be done if we uphold good environmental practices, like what we have done over the past 62 years.

Having a national tree in our collective consciousness now elevates our environmental awareness and importance of sustainable development to the next level.

It also helps to instil a sense of



pride in the flora and fauna of this country. At 130 million years old, our rainforest is one of the oldest in the world and is teeming with a vibrant living ecosystem.

The writer questioned how the tree was selected and suggested that the selection should have been based on voting. The truth is that unlike flowers or logos for Visit Malaysia Year 2020, Malaysians generally know very little about tree species. Most live in concrete jungles, oblivious to the nitty-gritty details of the green foliage which still covers over half the land in this country. I believe this was why the government made the selection.

On that note, I'd implore all

Malaysians to visit the Hutan Kita exhibition at the KL Tower until Sept 22. Entrance is free.

Last weekend, I brought my grandchildren who, like many Malaysians of their age, had only a scant idea of what Malaysian forests look like. It was indeed an eye-opening experience for them as they were exposed for the first time to facets of our rich natural wonders.

I believe this is the first time such an exhibition is being held, and in the spirit of Merdeka, everyone should pay the Hutan Kita exhibition a visit.

HEW KING TIONG
Petaling Jaya



EMAIL editor@thestar.com.my
MAIL The Editor,
Menara Star, 15,
Jalan 16/11, Section 16,
46350 Petaling Jaya.
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