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'Logging, clearing of forests should be reduced to prevent disasters'

KUALA LUMPUR: Former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad wants logging activities and clearing of forests be reduced to avoid disasters.

He said Malaysia had other sources of wealth which could generate national income and which would not cause environmental degradation.

"So, if we reduce logging, even if it is legal, we will get many benefits.

"We have seen the floods occurring in Kelantan and

Terengganu — the East Coast states. One of the causes was the cutting of forest trees, so rain water came down straight from the hill slopes and not absorbed by the soil, resulting in floods."

Dr Mahathir said this to reporters after visiting the digital project of the Forest Research Institute of Malaysia (FRIM) and placing a plaque at the institute, here, yesterday to denote it as a national heritage.

FRIM was gazetted as a natural

heritage site in 2009 and declared a national heritage in 2012.

Dr Mahathir said the people should learn lessons from the environmental disasters that occurred in the country and act by finding ways to preserve the flora and fauna.

Meanwhile, he expressed happiness that after 30 years since its establishment, FRIM was not only a site where various species of plants were found but also a popular recreation area for city dwellers. — Bernama