

# Call to protect the environment

**METRO NEWS**

Friday, 05 Jun 2020

By ZAZALI MUSA



Orang Seletar villagers fishing in the waters off Danga Bay. — Filepic

JOHOR BARU: Johoreans hope more people will play their part in protecting the environment as it is a shared responsibility.

They said awareness programmes would help reinforce the need to do more for the environment, after special activities were carried out in conjunction with World Environment Day 2020.

Retiree A. Madhavan, 61, said well-planned activities and programmes focused on conservation and protection would create better awareness on the importance of protecting the environment.

He said it was comforting to read scientific findings published in the media that global pollution level had declined and the environment was getting cleaner due to the movement control order (MCO) worldwide following the Covid-19 pandemic.

“Hopefully, post-Covid 19, the global pollution index will be lower, with cleaner air for mankind,” said Madhavan.

"Besides this, political will is very important. The relevant authorities must have rules and regulations for all to follow and effective enforcement measures to protect Mother Nature," added Madhavan.

Kampung Bakar Batu Perling village head, Tok Batin Kais Tee, 57, hoped the Johor government would not neglect environmental concerns.

"The well-being of the Orang Seletar tribe depends very much on this. Our livelihood has been affected, with less catch from the sea due to pollution and land reclamation."

Kais said land reclamation had damaged mangrove and river banks, the sanctuary of mangrove mud crabs and freshwater prawns.

"Most of us depend on the sea for our livelihood. We are not used to doing other types of work and we are worried because our seafood harvest is dwindling by the day," he said.

He highlighted that the villagers rarely went out to fish now unlike in the past, and instead they collected scrap metal, cardboard boxes, plastic bottles and cans to sell to karung guni men (scrap collectors).

He said they used to fish in the waters off Danga Bay fronting the village but now they have to go further, to Kota Tinggi by car or Gelang Patah by boat, about 45km and 13km from their village respectively, to find seafood to catch.



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A communications executive with a multinational corporation, Kathleen Ann Kili said her company had organised activities to promote environmental awareness among its employees to mark World Environment Day 2020.

She said the company had set up a sustainability team to undertake activities such as tree planting, beach cleaning and internal environment-related initiatives.

"Unfortunately, we are unable to organise tree planting and beach cleaning this year due to the MCO following the Covid-19 pandemic," she said.

She added that throughout the MCO which was imposed from March 18, the company had organised sustainable challenges for employees working from home.

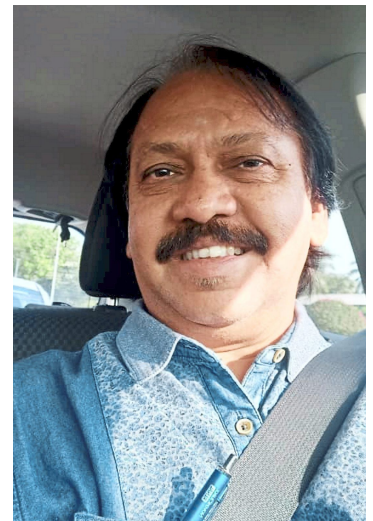
Kathleen said they were required to come up with ideas incorporating the 3R (reduce, reuse, recycle) practices as part of their daily life for better awareness.

"We received good response to the challenge and all of us could share the ideas and practices," she noted.

She said the company minimised usage of paper, encouraged the 1,500 employees to bring their own containers to buy food and drinks from the canteen and ensured canteen operators used biodegradable food containers.

World Environment Day is celebrated on June 5 every year, and is the United Nations' principal vehicle for encouraging awareness and action for the protection of the environment.

First held in 1974, it has been a flagship campaign for raising awareness of emerging environmental issues ranging



Madhavan says the authorities must have effective enforcement measures to protect Mother Nature.

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