

# Putatan needs more edu centres: Yahya

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PUTATAN: Deputy Chief Minister Datuk Yahya Hussin called for more educational institutions to be based in Putatan due to its proximity to the city centre.

"Don't just focus on Sepanggar as an education hub," he said at a 'fisheries stock enhancement for the welfare of local communities' (phase 1 - shrimp ranching at the Petagas river) programme held at Kg Muhibbah Multipurpose hall here, Monday.

Yahya and Universiti Malaysia Sabah (UMS) Vice Chancellor Prof Datuk Dr Kamaruzaman Hj Ampon released 4,000 to 5,000 juvenile shrimps into the river where a research was conducted before the ranching operation took place.

"We should look towards Japan and imitate how well they take care of the cleanliness of their rivers and oceans," said Yahya and added that something must be done regarding the water pollution at the Petagas river.

Putatan district officer Awang Abd Ghani Pg Yusoff suggested that water traps be used to reduce pollution and also said if the cleanliness there is maintained,

the area can be turned into a tourism hotspot where boats can be turned into water taxis like in Thailand that helps lure in more people to the area.

Meanwhile, Yahya applauded UMS' efforts in increasing the shrimp stocks.

"Fish stocks are decreasing drastically and drastic measures are needed to help fishermen who are not getting as much as they used to. The increasing of stocks and releasing of shrimps are a new way in the management of fisheries. This method has been done on trial basis to test its role in the development of the industry."

"In this context, I welcome UMS' initiative. Fishermen are going to benefit from this programme as the population of fish increases. If it is done properly and produces desired results, it is vital to keep it up for the welfare of our people."

Kamaruzaman said that the project is intended to have multiple benefits which include motivating the public to take care of the ecosystem.

"When people see the benefits coming from our rivers and seas, they will be more inclined to protect the environment

which offers food resources to them."

"Obviously, it is not just the shrimp that we are ranching today for increasing its catch but for enhancing the ecosystem of the rivers and the seas where rivers discharge."

"Controlling pollution of the rivers is important for reducing pollution of the sea. This will support bio-diversity and improve quality and quantity of seafood harvest," he added.

"I would like to emphasise that this is the first but not the last stock enhancement activity by UMS. We will continue to contribute more seed to support the recruit-type of ranching. Freshwater shrimp is not the only species we will provide but it is a good start for the programme."

He said the reason for selecting this species is due to the fact that it feeds on low levels of the food chain and is unlikely to negatively interact with the aquatic fauna or disturb the ecosystem balance.

"It is a long term population restoration effort to overcome the depletion caused by over-fishing and habitat degradation."



Yahya and Kamaruzaman releasing 4,000 to 5,000 juvenile shrimps into the river.