

MAHATHIR - PADI

ALOR STAR, SEPT 19 (BERNAMA) - DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMED SUGGESTED TODAY THAT SMALL PADI FARMERS IN THE MUDA IRRIGATION SCHEME AMALGAMATE THEIR HOLDINGS INTO BIGGER LOTS OF ABOUT 50 ACRES AND WORK ON THE CO-OPERATIVE SYSTEM. IN THIS WAY, PADI CULTIVATION COULD BE FULLY MECHANISED THUS REDUCING THE COST OF PRODUCTION.

DR. MAHATHIR WAS SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AFTER BEING BRIEFED ON THE DEVELOPMENT AND ACHIEVEMENT OF THE MUDA AGRICULTURE DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY BY ITS GENERAL MANAGER DATUK MOHAMED TAMIM YEOP HERE.

ALSO PRESENT WAS KEDAH MENTRI BESAR DATUK SRI SYED AHMAD SHAHABUDDIN.

DR. MAHATHIR SAID THAT IF THE FARMERS WERE WILLING TO GROUP THEMSELVES INTO SMALL SELF-CONTAINED COMMUNITIES THEY WOULD NOT ONLY BE ABLE TO IMPROVE THEIR STANDARD OF LIVING BUT ALSO MAXIMISE THE USE OF THEIR LAND.

EVENTUALLY, THEY COULD MOVE AWAY FROM PEASANT FARMING AND RUN PROPER FARMS BY EMPLOYING FARM MANAGERS AND USING MACHINES. -
BERNAMA MORE 1600/BW

THIS WOULD HELP TO OFFSET THE EXPECTED FUTURE LABOUR SHORTAGE AS A RESULT OF THE URBAN DRIFT, HE SAID.

DR. MAHATHIR ALSO SAID THAT FARMERS, IN ADDITION TO CULTIVATING THEIR LAND, SHOULD GO INTO BUSINESS IN THE PURCHASING, RENTING AND SERVICING OF MACHINES USED IN PADI PRODUCTION.

THEY SHOULD ALSO CO-OPERATE AMONG ONE ANOTHER TO CULTIVATE LAND, ESPECIALLY THOSE AROUND THEIR KAMPUNGS, WITH FRUITS.

FRUITS LIKE MANGOES, IF PLANTED ON A LARGE SCALE, COULD BE SOLD FOR CANNING, HE SAID. OR ELSE THE FARMERS THEMSELVES COULD GO INTO THE CANNING INDUSTRY, HE ADDED.

DR. MAHATHIR, WHO WAS ON A THREE-DAY VISIT TO KEDAH LEFT FOR KUALA LUMPUR THIS AFTERNOON. - BERNAMA 1602/BW