

MAHATHIR - SILK
BM

KUALA BERANG, MAY 10 (BERNAMA) -- THE GOVERNMENT IS CONSIDERING MAKING THE SILKWORM INDUSTRY A MAJOR RURAL INDUSTRY IF THE PROJECT AT AJIL NEAR SHOWS SUCCESS, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID TODAY.

THE PROJECT HAD POTENTIAL FOR DEVELOPMENT INTO A RURAL INDUSTRY, HE TOLD REPORTERS DURING A TOUR OF THE PROJECT IMPLEMENTED BY THE TERENGGANU ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION.

HE POINTED OUT, HOWEVER, THAT THE INDUSTRY REQUIRED DISCIPLINE AND DEDICATION BUT BELIEVED THAT IF CARRIED OUT WELL, IT WOULD DEVOLVE INTO A CATALYST TO STIMULATE THE RURAL ECONOMY.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID HE WAS IMPRESSED WITH THE RESULTS OF THE PROJECTS, WHICH WAS A NEW VENTURE IN THE COUNTRY AND STILL IN THE TRIAL STAGE. MORE 1640/SL
MAHATHIR - SILK 2 KUALA BERANG

EARLIER, IN BRIEFING THE PRIME MINISTER, STATE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION GENERAL MANAGER DATUK AABDUL AZIZ IBRAHIM SAID THE SILKWORM WAS INTRODUCED IN THE COUNTRY IN 1972 BUT EXPLOITED COMMERCIALY BY THE CORPORATION FROM ' ONLY ' 1980 . .

HE SAID THAT 400 HECTARES IN THE AREA HAD BEEN INITIALLY DEVELOPED FOR MULBERRY CULTIVATION AND AS A SITE FOR THE BUILDING HOUSING THE SILKWORMS, A FACTORY AND OFFICES.

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT HAD PROVIDED A \$9 MILLION LOAN FOR THE PROJECT WHICH COULD PRODUCE MORE THAN 150 METRIC TONNES OF SILK COCOONS . .

HE SAID THE COCOONS WERE WORTH \$1.5 MILLION UNPROCESSED BUT WOULD NET \$2.5 MILLION IF PROCESSED INTO SILK THREAD . .

THE THREAD COULD BE WEAVED INTO 459,000 METRES OF SILK CLOTH OF A TOTAL VALUE OF ABOUT \$18 MILLION.

DATUK AZIZ ALSO SAID THE CORPORATION ENCOURAGED FARMERS TO BREED SILKWORMS. MORE 1759/WS

MAHATHIR - SILK 3 KUALA BERANG

HE SAID ONLY LARGE AND HEALTHY SILKWORMS WERE DISTRIBUTED TO THE FARMERS . .

THE PRIME MINISTER, WHO IS ON A THREE-DAY VISIT OF TERENGGANU, WAS ACCOMPANIED BY DATUK SERI DATIN PAOUKA'OR. SITI HASMAH, AND MENTERI BESAR DATUK AMAR HAJI WAN MOKHTAR AHMAD, AGRICULTURE MINISTER DATUK MANANOTHMAN, AND THEIR WIVES. BERNAMA 1800/WS