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MAHATHIR-DEVELOPMENT
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KUALA LUMPUR, NOV. 30 (BERNAMA) -- THE GOVERNMENT IS INTRODUCING A NEW STRATEGY TO DEVELOP KAMPUNGS THROUGHOUT THE COUNTRY AS PART OF EFFORTS TO REDUCE THE INCIDENCE OF POVERTY.

ACCORDING TO THE LATEST ISSUE OF +MERDEKA+, THE OFFICIAL ORGAN OF UMNO, THE STRATEGY HAD BEEN FORMULATED WITH A VIEW TO INCREASING AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTIVITY AND THE INCOME, OF FARMERS AND RURAL WORKERS.

THE STRATEGY COVERS THREE ASPECTS: AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH ESTATE-TYPE OF MANAGEMENT, SETTING UP OF COTTAGE INDUSTRIES OR OTHER TYPES OF NON-AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND REORGANIZATION OF KAMPUNGS INTO NEW GROWTH CENTRES TO BRING ABOUT INTEGRATED DEVELOPMENT.

MERDEKA QUOTED PRIME MINISTER (DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD) AS SAYING THAT THE NEW STRATEGY WAS CONCERNED WITH ABSOLUTE POVERTY AND NOT RELATIVE POVERTY.

THE PRIME MINISTER FELT THAT THE RATE OF POVERTY PREVAILING IN MALAYSIA SHOULD NOT BE COMPARED WITH THAT IN OTHER COUNTRIES BECAUSE OF DIFFERENT FACTORS AND SITUATIONS. --- MORE

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DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR WANTS THE POVERTY RATE TO BE EXPLAINED TO THOSE WHO STILL DID NOT UNDERSTAND THAT THE POVERTY RATE IN THIS COUNTRY WAS HIGH BECAUSE IT WAS THE GOVERNMENT WHICH HAD SET THE RATE AT THAT LEVEL.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT HAD SET ONE PARTICULAR STANDARD OF INCOME IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE CURRENT CONSUMER PRICE INDEX (CPI) AS A GUIDE TO DETERMINE ABSOLUTE POVERTY WHICH WAS RELATIVE TO THE PEOPLE'S GENERAL STANDARD OF LIVING.

OUR CONCEPT OF POVERTY IS DIFFERENT AS WE ASPIRE TO ACHIEVE A HIGHER STANDARD OF LIVING FAR ABOVE THE POVERTY RATE USUALLY ADOPTED IN OTHER COUNTRIES, HE SAID.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID HE HIMSELF WOULD OVERSEE THE PROGRESS OF THE VARIOUS ACTIVITIES UNDER THE NEW STRATEGY AND TAKE APPROPRIATE ACTION TO ENSURE THEIR SUCCESS.

THIS WILL INCLUDE TAKING ACTIONS WHICH MIGHT PROVE UNPOPULAR, HE ADDED.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR HOPED THAT ALL OFFICERS INVOLVED IN THE NEW STRATEGY WOULD WORK EARNESTLY TO IMPLEMENT THE VARIOUS PROGRAMMES THAT HAVE BEEN PLANNED FOR THE WELLBEING OF THE PEOPLE.

THE GOVERNMENT'S STRESS ON REDUCING THE INCIDENCE OF POVERTY WAS A CONTINUING EFFORT AND THE OFFICERS SHOULD TAKE THE NEW STRATEGY AS A CHALLENGE WHICH SHOULD BE BORNE WITH RESPONSIBILITY. -- BERNAMA

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