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MAHATHIR-FARMERS
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KUALA LUMPUR, AUG 6 (BERNAMA) -- PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TODAY URGED FARMERS AND CULTIVATORS TO LEARN NEW METHODS USING MODERN TECHNOLOGY TO INCREASE THEIR PRODUCTIVITY. WITHOUT MODERNISING, FARMERS AND FISHERMEN WOULD FIND THE RETURNS WOULD NOT BE COMMENSURATE WITH THE FINANCIAL AND LABOUR INPUT, HE ADDED.

+WE MUST KEEP PACE WITH THE ADVANCES IN TECHNOLOGY OR FACE THE PROSPECT OF BEING LEFT BEHIND AND EVENTUALLY BECOMING EXTINCT,+ HE SAID WHEN LAUNCHING THE NATIONAL LEVEL FARMERS AND FISHERMEN'S DAY CELEBRATIONS AT THE PUTRA WORLD TRADE CENTRE HERE.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID MODERNISED FARMING AND FISHING REQUIRED ONLY A SMALL WORKFORCE TO KEEP THE TWO SECTORS GOING AND THOSE CHOOSING TO REMAIN FARMERS AND FISHERMEN SHOULD LEARN TO ADAPT TO MODERN TECHNOLOGY FROM OUTSIDE SO THAT ITS APPLICATION WOULD PROFIT THEM. -- MORE
2057MST 06 08 86

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+WE MIGHT BE DISHEARTENED BY OUR INABILITY TO COMPETE WITH OTHER COUNTRIES BECAUSE WE HAVE ONLY A LARGE LABOUR FORCE AT OUR DISPOSAL.

+WE CAN CONCEDE DEFEAT AND SURRENDER OUR FUTURE TO FATE BUT IF WE DO THIS, OUR LOT WILL NEVER CHANGE BUT WILL EVEN WORSEN,+ THE PRIME MINISTER SAID.

MANY HAD ALSO SAID MODERN FISHING TECHNIQUES WERE NOT SUITABLE FOR THE COUNTRY BUT WHAT WAS SADDENING TO NOTE IN THIS MATTER WAS THAT FOREIGN FISHERMEN WERE USING MODERN METHODS AND REAPING THE RICH BOUNTY OF MALAYSIA'S MARINE RESOURCES, HE SAID.

THIS, HE STRESSED, ONLY WENT TO SHOW THAT A NEW WAY CONSIDERED UNSUITABLE WOULD OVER TIME AND USE BECOME ACCEPTABLE.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THAT AT ONE TIME WHEN THE GOVERNMENT IMPLEMENTED THE MUDA IRRIGATION PROJECT, THERE WERE PEOPLE WHO RAISED A HUE AND CRY OVER THE PROJECT WHEN RATS +BIGGER THAN CATS+ WERE FOUND BREEDING AT THE DRAINAGE BUNDS. -- MORE
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MAHATHIR-FARMERS 3 KUALA LUMPUR

+BUT TODAY THE FARMERS IN THE AREA ARE EARNING AN INCOME WAY ABOVE THOSE CARRYING OUT SINGLE CROPPING,+ HE SAID.

HE ADVISED FARMERS AND FISHERMEN NOT TO BE DISCOURAGED IF THE NEW TECHNIQUES THEY USED DID NOT BRING RESULTS AT FIRST. THEY SHOULD INSTEAD TRY TO ADAPT THE NEW TECHNOLOGY TO SUIT LOCAL REQUIREMENTS.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR HOWEVER REMINDED THEM THAT MODERN TECHNOLOGY ALONE WOULD NOT GUARANTEE INCREASED OUTPUT AS WHAT WAS ALSO REQUIRED WAS THE CAPACITY FOR HARD WORK AND DISCIPLINE, QUALITIES FOUND AMONG ECONOMICALLY SUCCESSFUL SOCIETIES SUCH AS THE SOUTH KOREANS AND JAPANESE.

HE SAID IT WOULD BE CHEAPER TO IMPORT RICE THAN PRODUCE IT LOCALLY BUT THEN MANY PEOPLE WOULD BE UNEMPLOYED IF THE PADI GROWING INDUSTRY WAS NOT SUPPORTED BY THE GOVERNMENT THROUGH SUBSIDIES.

NEVERTHELESS, FARMERS SHOULD STILL WORK HARD TO INCREASE PRODUCTIVITY IN A PROFITABLE WAY. -- MORE

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THE PRIME MINISTER PRESENTED A TABLE CLOCK, \$800 CASH AND A RETURN AIR TICKET TO KOTA KINABALU TO ENCIK ABU BAKAR BOYADI FROM SEREMBAN, THE WINNER OF THE 1986 BEST FARMER AWARD.

HE ALSO VISITED THE AGRICULTURAL EXPO AT THE PUTRA WORLD TRADE CENTRE.

-- BERNAMA

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