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MAHATHIR-FISH
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JELI, OCT 2 (BERNAMA) -- PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO HAVE SUFFICIENT PATROL TEAMS TO CONDUCT SURVEILLANCE OF THE WHOLE OF THE COUNTRY'S EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE (EEZ).

THIS IS BECAUSE THE EEZ IS AN EXTENSIVE AREA AND THE COST OF UNDERTAKING THE PATROLS WOULD BE HIGH, HE SAID WHEN CLOSING A LEADERSHIP COURSE FOR PENGHULUS IN KELANTAN AND PRESENTING CERTIFICATES AT THE SERI PERGAU SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT CAMP NEAR HERE.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT COULD INCREASE THE NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT AND SHIPS TO PATROL THE EEZ BUT THE HEAVY EXPENDITURE COULD ADVERSELY AFFECT THE ALLOCATION FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT.

+THE DAILY EXPENSES FOR A COMBAT CRAFT TO CONDUCT PATROLS CAN BE FROM \$30,000 TO \$40,000, AND THE BIGGER THE VESSEL THE LARGER THE EXPENDITURE, FROM \$40,000 TO \$50,000,+ HE SAID.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID STEPPING UP PATROLS COULD NOT HELP INCREASE THE EARNINGS FROM FISH LANDINGS AND EFFORTS TO ARREST TRESPASSERS DID NOT ALWAYS SUCCEED BECAUSE OF THE WIDE EXPANSE OF SEA. -- MORE

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INSTEAD, HE SAID, THE INCREASE IN FISH LANDINGS DEPENDED FULLY ON THE EXTENT TO WHICH MALAYSIAN FISHERMEN WERE WILLING TO VENTURE INTO DEEP-SEA FISHING.

IN THIS WAY, HE ADDED, THE GOVERNMENT NEED NOT HAVE TO SPEND MUCH MONEY TO HAVE PATROLS.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID MALAYSIAN FISHERMEN, BY VENTURING INTO DEEP-SEA FISHING, COULD INDIRECTLY CONTRIBUTE TO THE NATIONAL INCOME WHICH COULD BE USED FOR DEVELOPMENT.

+SADLY THOUGH, NOT MANY HAVE ACCEPTED THE CHALLENGE. ONLY 50 FISHERMEN HAVE COME FORWARD WHEN SOME 1,500 ARE REQUIRED,+ HE SAID.

-- BERNAMA

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