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MAHATHIR-COCONUTS

BM

LANGKAWI, DEC 26 (BERNAMA) -- PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TODAY CALLED ON THE RELEVANT QUARTERS TO INTENSIFY RESEARCH ON THE USES OF THE COCONUT TO HELP BOOST THE INCOME OF COCONUT FARMERS.

THE TRADITIONAL USE OF THE COCONUT AND ITS PARTS WAS NO LONGER SUITABLE NOW, HE SAID WHEN LAUNCHING THE INTERNATIONAL COCONUT FESTIVAL HERE.

HE SAID THE COCONUT INDUSTRY COULD BE SUSTAINED THROUGH MODERN AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH AS HE BELIEVED A PROFITABLE HANDICRAFT INDUSTRY COULD BE DEVELOPED WITH THE USE OF COCONUT PARTS.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THAT IF PACKED GINGER COULD BE SOLD AT A LONDON SUPERMARKET AT SEVERAL TIMES THE LOCAL PRICE, HE BELIEVED THE SAME COULD BE DONE FOR COCONUTS.

HE PRAISED AGRICULTURE MINISTER DATUK SERI SANUSI JUNID FOR INTRODUCING THE +DRINK YOUNG COCONUT WATER+ CAMPAIGN WHICH HAD HELPED TO BOOST THE PRICES OF COCONUTS. -- MORE  
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HE SAID THAT INITIALLY THE PEOPLE, INCLUDING HIMSELF, HAD LAUGHED AT THE CAMPAIGN BUT IT HAD PROVED TO BE SUCCESSFUL, SO MUCH SO THAT THERE WAS NOW A PROBLEM IN GETTING YOUNG COCONUTS.

THE SUCCESS OF THE CAMPAIGN HAD RAISED THE PRICE OF COCONUTS AND AS A RESULT THE GOVERNMENT NEED NOT HAVE TO GIVE SUBSIDIES TO COCONUT FARMERS ANYMORE, HE ADDED.

HE HOPED THAT THE TWO-DAY COCONUT FESTIVAL, WHICH INCLUDES A SEMINAR AND COCONUT TREE CLIMBING COMPETITION, WOULD HELP TO PROMOTE MALAYSIA OVERSEAS.

THE COCONUT TREE CLIMBING COMPETITION HAS DRAWN 30 PARTICIPANTS FROM THAILAND, THE PHILIPPINES, INDONESIA, SRI LANKA, HAWAII, MALDIVES, FIJI, PAPUA NEW GUINEA AND MALAYSIA.

PRESENT WERE THE PRIME MINISTER'S WIFE, DATUK SERI DATIN PADUKA DR SITI HASMAH ALI AND DATUK SERI SANUSI. -- BERNAMA  
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