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B E193 AAE
MAHATHIR-HANDICRAFT

BM

JITRA, JAN 29 ⁸⁸ (BERNAMA) -- PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TODAY ADVISED HANDICRAFT MAKERS IN THE RURAL AREAS, PARTICULARLY MALAYS, TO SWITCH TO LARGE-SCALE PRODUCTION WITH THE AID OF MECHANISATION.

HE SAID THEY WOULD BE ABLE TO CAPTURE A GREATER SHARE OF THE MARKET AND BOOST THEIR INCOME BY DOING THIS AND GIVING UP THEIR TRADITIONAL PRODUCTION METHODS.

THE SLOW TRADITIONAL METHODS WOULD BE A LOSS TO NOT ONLY THE MANUFACTURERS BUT THE NATION IF THEY WERE UNABLE TO MEET BIG ORDERS FOR HANDICRAFT PRODUCTS, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID WHEN OPENING A *3 MILLION RUBBER GLOVE MANUFACTURING FACTORY OF THE NATIONAL RUBBER SMALLHOLDERS COOPERATIVE AT PAYA PAHLAWAN, BINJAL NEAR HERE.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID A FOREIGN FIRM RECENTLY PLACED AN ORDER FOR 200,000 RATTAN BASKETS BUT LOCAL HANDICRAFT MAKERS COULD NOT MEET THE DEMAND

+THIS CLEARLY SHOWS THE TIME HAS COME FOR THE RURAL PEOPLE TO MECHANISE AND NOT CONTINUE TO PRODUCE HANDICRAFT ON AN INDIVIDUAL BASIS,+ HE SAID. -- MORE

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HE URGED RURAL HANDICRAFT MAKERS TO BE SERIOUS IN THEIR WORK AND NOT STOP PRODUCTION FOR DAYS JUST BECAUSE OF FAMILY SOCIAL GET-TOGETHERS.

THIS WOULD AFFECT THEIR MARKET OPPORTUNITIES BECAUSE BUYERS WOULD NOT TOLERATE DELAYS IN GETTING THEIR SUPPLY.

HE ALSO SAID COTTAGE INDUSTRIES SHOULD BE MANAGED MORE EFFECTIVELY.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID IT WAS THE POLICY OF THE GOVERNMENT TO ASSIST IN AND ENCOURAGE THE SETTING UP OF COTTAGE INDUSTRIES TO CREATE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE PEOPLE.

THE GOVERNMENT WOULD HELP PROVIDE LOANS TO THOSE LACKING THE CAPITAL TO START THE PROJECTS.

ASSISTANCE WOULD ALSO BE EXTENDED TO ENHANCE THE SKILLS OF THOSE INVOLVED IN COTTAGE INDUSTRIES, HE SAID. -- MORE

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HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT ENCOURAGED THE SETTING UP OF COTTAGE INDUSTRIES THAT WERE ABLE TO OPERATE AT LOWER COSTS.

THE PRIME MINISTER REGRETTED THAT MANY BUMIPUTERA VENTURES HAD TO CLOSE SHOP OWING TO MANagements NOT BEING EFFICIENT AND TRUSTWORTHY.

THERE WERE ALSO WORKERS WHO VENTED THEIR ANGER AT THE MANAGEMENT BY SABOTAGING THE FACTORY, HE SAID.

HE CITED AN INCIDENT IN A PINEAPPLE-CANNING PLANT IN JOHOR WHERE SOME WORKERS PLACED LIZARDS AND FOREIGN MATTER INTO THE CANS TO SHOW THEIR ANGER AT THE MANAGEMENT.

A CONSUMER IN THE UNITED STATES, WHERE THE CANNED PINEAPPLES WERE EXPORTED, LODGED A COMPLAINT WITH THE AUTHORITIES, RESULTING IN THE MANAGEMENT HAVING TO TAKE BACK THREE CONTAINER-LOADS OF PINEAPPLE CANS.

THE REPUTATION OF THE CANNING PLANT WAS DAMAGED AND IT SUFFERED A LOSS, HE SAID. -- MORE
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IN ANOTHER INCIDENT, HE SAID, THE MANAGER OF A GOVERNMENT-OWNED SUBSIDIARY REPORTED THAT SEVERAL PRODUCTS OF THE COMPANY WERE DEFECTIVE WHEN THEY WERE IN FACT IN GOOD CONDITION, JUST SO THEY COULD BE AUCTIONED OFF CHEAPLY TO ENABLE HIM TO RECEIVE A KICKBACK FOR HIS EFFORT.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID MANAGERS AND EMPLOYEES SHOULD NOT RESORT TO SUCH PRACTICES.

HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT WOULD BE FIRM IN DEALING WITH CORRUPTION, IRRESPECTIVE OF WHETHER THOSE INVOLVED WERE DATUKS, MEMBERS OF PARLIAMENT OR POLITICAL LEADERS.

EARLIER, KEDAH MENTERI BESAR DATUK SERI HAJI OSMAN AROFF SAID THE STATE GOVERNMENT WOULD RELAX CONDITIONS FOR INVESTORS WISHING TO SET UP COTTAGE INDUSTRIES IN THE STATE. -- BERNAMA
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