

Use new methods, PM tells settlers

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JENGGKA, Sun. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today urged settlers in agricultural schemes to use new technology and adopt a systematic management approach in order to increase productivity and profits.

In his address to mark National Settlers' Day here, the Prime Minister said discipline and determination alone were not enough to achieve success.

"There must be consistent modernisation and upgrading of methods and skills if we want to attain greater success," he said.

He said the Government has allotted vast sums of money and land for the settlers to improve themselves and they should from now on be self-reliant.

"You should not always depend on Government assistance," he said.

Dr Mahathir's address was delivered by Pahang Menteri Besar, Datuk Khalil Yaakob, and was greeted by applause by some 15,000 settlers from all over the country who gathered to celebrate the occasion.

Confidence

The Prime Minister, who was to have addressed the gathering, could not attend as he is down with flu. However, his wife, Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Ali, was present and later opened the Settlers' Expo.

Dr Mahathir also said the celebration was significant to the settlers because they appreciated the trust and confidence the Government had in them in helping in economic and national development.

"To the Government, it is also significant because the opening of such vast land has increased the Government's revenue and allowed more individual ownership of land," he said.

Dr Mahathir said at present the agricultural sector contributed 20 per cent of total production in the economy.

He added that a large proportion of this came from rubber and palm oil which accounted for 48 per cent of the country's total agricultural output.

The Prime Minister said the country has achieved much progress and the Government would continue to strive to achieve much greater success.

"With this in mind, the settlers should be far-sighted and explore all avenues to increase productivity and profits."

Dr Mahathir also said rubber and palm oil were now facing stiff competition from other commodities which could affect their prices.

As such, the settlers whose incomes depend mainly on these two commodities, should improve the quality of their produce and at the same time reduce production costs.

"This requires knowledge, efficiency and dedication," he added.