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MAHATHIR-HANDICRAFT  
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KUALA LUMPUR, JUNE 3 (BERNAMA) -- THE MALAYSIAN HANDICRAFT DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, NOW UNDER THE NATIONAL AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT MINISTRY, WILL SOON BE PLACED UNDER THE PRIME MINISTER'S DEPARTMENT, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE CABINET HAD RECENTLY DECIDED THAT THE CORPORATION BE PUT UNDER HIS RESPONSIBILITY AND HE HOPED THAT HE WOULD BE ABLE TO GUIDE IT TOWARDS FURTHER PROGRESS.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THIS WHEN ADDRESSING A HARI RAYA GATHERING OF THE CORPORATION'S STAFF TOGETHER AT THE COMPOUND OF THE KARYANEKA COMPLEX HERE. DATUK SERI DATIN PADUKA DR HASMAH ALI WAS ALSO PRESENT.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID HE WAS ALSO PLEASED WITH THE PERFORMANCE OF THE HANDICRAFT SECTOR WHICH NOW RECORDED MONTHLY SALES OF \$400,000.

IN THE PAST, HE SAID, IT WAS DIFFICULT TO EVEN ACHIEVE AN ANNUAL TURNOVER OF \$100,000.--MORE  
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THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE HANDICRAFT INDUSTRY HAD UNDERGONE RAPID GROWTH AND IT WAS NO LONGER A PAST-TIME ACTIVITY.

HE SAID THE CORPORATION MUST DIVERSIFY ITS PRODUCTS, BY MAKING USE OF MATERIALS EASILY AVAILABLE IN THE COUNTRY.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ALSO SUGGESTED THAT HANDICRAFT MAKERS IN THE COUNTRY FOLLOW THE FOOTSTEPS OF THEIR COUNTERPARTS IN THE WEST WHO SET UP GUILDS OF CRAFTSMEN TO HELP THEM IMPROVE ON THEIR PRODUCTS AS WELL TO SAFEGUARD THEIR INTEREST.

THE PRIME MINISTER ALSO SAID THAT ALTHOUGH THE EMPHASIS WAS ON THE LOOK EAST POLICY, IT WOULD NOT BE WRONG FOR THE PEOPLE TO ADOPT WESTERN VALUES.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR WAS RECENTLY BESTOWED THE +FREEDOM OF THE WORSHIPFUL COMPANY OF CARPENTERS+ AWARD BY THE ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH CARPENTERS IN LONDON.

THE PRIME MINISTER AND HIS WIFE LATER TOOK PART IN A HARI RAYA +CONGKAK+ COMPETITION AND WERE ALSO JOINED BY THE DEPUTY NATIONAL AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT MINISTER, DATUK TAJOL ROSLI GHAZALI, AND CORPORATION CHAIRMAN, TAN SRI HAJAH AISHAH GHANI. --BERNAMA  
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