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Mahathir-Mulu

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MULU NATIONAL PARK (SARAWAK), May 24⁹¹ (Bernama) -- The Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is on a four-day visit to Sarawak, toured the Mulu National Park yesterday and met with members of the Berawan and Penan communities living there.

The Berawans belong to the Orang Ulu group settling in the Sarawak interior while the Penans are shifting cultivators.

The Prime Minister advised them to preserve their arts and culture as they characterised their identities.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir advised them to keep up with the times and change their life styles so that they were not left behind.

+We can't cling on to our old life styles as this will lead to the backwardness and extinction of our race, + he said when addressing members of the two communities at the rest house here last night after cultural performances in conjunction with the Prime Minister's visit.

The Prime Minister was happy the Penans have adapted themselves to permanent settlements and have taken up farming well. -- more

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Mahathir - Mulu 2 Mulu National Park

The Prime Minister said if they were settled in one area, it would be easy for the government to provide water and electricity supply to them and they could then lead more comfortable lives.

It was the desire of both the Federal and Sarawak Governments to bring development to the isolated communities in the state, he said.

Though the communities were far away from Kuala Lumpur nevertheless they were always in the thoughts of Federal leaders, he added.

He said the Mulu National Park had become popular the worldover in view of its scenic beauty and large and breathtaking caves.

The number of visitors to the Mulu National Park had been increasing and this would enable the local people to be directly involved in the tourist industry, the Prime Minister said.

They could sell local handicraft to tourists and become tourist guides and supplement their income, he said.

About 5,000 tourists visited the park last year and 60 per cent of them were foreigners. -- Bernama

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