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VILLAGES CAN BE AS MODERN AS TOWNS IF RESIDENTS ACCEPT CHANGE

LEAD Mahathir-villages (with pix)

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HULU LANGAT, July 23<sup>92</sup> (Bernama) -- Villages can be as developed as towns if residents are willing to accept changes, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

As such, villagers should equip themselves with the necessary skills and knowledge to ensure they were not left behind in the march towards progress, he added.

Speaking when launching the Selangor +Kampung Ku+ (My Village) programme in Pekan Batu 1.4, near here, he said progress would be meaningless if the situation in villages remain unchanged.

The government could have all sorts of policies to bring about changes in villages but the end result would depend on the sincerity of the villagers themselves to receive the changes, he added.

The +Kampung Ku+ programme aims to revive the spirit of co-operation among villagers besides encouraging them to accept changes brought about, by- modern times. -- more

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LEAD Mahathir-villages 2 Hulu Langat

Present at the launching ceremony today were the Prime Minister's wife Datuk Seri Datin Paduka Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, Selangor Menteri Besar Tan Sri **Muhammad** Haji Muhammad Taib and Information Minister Datuk Mohamed Rahmat.

Dr. Mahathir said there was nothing impossible that village residents, too, could not achieve including producing children who could one day lead the country or hold high positions.

+It is not where we are from that is important but our commitment to strive and tap our abilities.,+ he added.

The Prime Minister also urged villagers to reject certain groups which wanted **them** to shun development and progress.

He said such instigators had their own political aims at heart and were not bothered that villagers were still leading an uncomfortable life.

These groups also wanted to delay the nation's progress so that it would not be able to compete with developed nations, he added.

The Prime Minister said the government had no ulterior motives in developing villages and its only aim was to see villagers enjoy a better standard of living. -- more

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LEAD Mahathir-villages 3 Hulu Langat

He added: +Villages should be developed in a more orderly and planned manner to enable their residents to increase their incomes.. . land cannot be abandoned and buildings should not be built without first considering the full economic utilisation of the land.+ he said.

Today 's launching of the +Kampung Ku+ programme took on a festival atmosphere with banners, lauding Dr Mahathir as +Hero of the Third World+ and +Father of, Malaysian Development+, strung along roads leading here.

The-welcoming ceremony for the Prime Minister was also to congratulate him on Malaysia's outstanding performance in highlighting various issues affecting the Third World at recent international fora, including the Earth Summit in Kio de Janeiro, Brazil.

Dr Mahathir said it was easy to be vocal at international conferences as all that was required was a tongue.

+However, such outspokenness will not carry weight unless the situation within the country is peaceful and the pace of development, something to be proud of,+ he added.-- more

▼23/07/13-12MST

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LEAD Mahathir-villages 4 (last) Hulu Langat

He said although Malaysia had not yet reached the status of a developed nation,, the international community acknowledged that the nation was rapidly developing.

The country's fast pace of progress was due to political stability brought about by the style of the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) government which catered for all the nation's races.

The launching ceremony today at the Pekan Batu 14 public field was carried iive by RTM. -- Bernama

▼23/07/13-12MST