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Mahathir-highlands

HILL DEVELOPMENT NEEDS PROPER PLANNING, SAYS MAHATHIR

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CAMERON HIGHLANDS, Aug. 11 (Bernama) -- Building in hill areas needs proper planning to prevent excessive slope-cutting in order to preserve the natural environment of the highlands, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

Detailed planning was necessary to avoid excessive slope-cutting because the highlands were a popular attraction for foreign tourists, he added.

"We should use construction methods that do not need excessive cutting of the slopes," he said when launching the eight-day Cameron Highlands Flower Festival 1994 here.

Excessive slope-cutting and tree-felling might affect the cool climate and natural environment to which the foreign tourists were attracted, he added.

Dr Mahathir said construction of a new highway linking the Cameron Highlands in Perak and Fraser's Hill and Genting Highlands in Pahang would take into account the need to preserve the highland environment. -- more

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Excessive felling of trees would be avoided to preserve the climate and natural beauty of highland areas while construction of buildings would be undertaken with minimal slope-cutting to prevent river pollution caused by soil erosion, he added.

Citing as example the experience in a country where excessive slope-cutting for building development had resulted in destruction of the environment, he said Malaysians should be grateful the country possessed highlands and forests as well as a cool climate in those areas, unlike in some countries.

The highlands and cool climate made it possible for the country to develop its tourism industry, like hotel construction, which provided jobs and income opportunities to the people, he added.

The people could also grow rubber and oil palm which formed part of the country's wealth to be shared by all people so long as they were willing to strive for it. -- more

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Dr Mahathir also said the government's privatisation policy had helped spur the provision of basic amenities for the people. They benefitted each time a privatisation project was implemented.

He cited as example the North-South Highway which was now popular with motorists although there were some quarters who complained about having to pay toll at first.

He urged the people here to take up flower growing on a small-scale but they were encouraged to form a large company which would enable them to maximise profits, undertake research and development and invest in high technology. -- Bernama

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