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Mahathir-Scientists

MANAGE R&D FUNDS BY BEING MORE SYMPATHETIC TOWARDS SCIENTISTS

KUALA LUMPUR, July 2 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today research and development funds should be managed in a way that will be more sympathetic towards the scientists involved in the R&D programme.

Nevertheless he acknowledged that it would be indeed difficult to evaluate an idea and the aim of the study, saying probably most of it would not yield anything.

"However when the research study brings about good results, the returns from the earlier funding will be immense," he said when launching the Silver Jubilee celebrations of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Environment here.

Dr Mahathir said ministry officers should adopt a positive attitude towards applications from scientists wishing to implement their respective research projects.

"They should extend close cooperation to our scientists particularly to those involved in research and who aspire to invent something useful," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said Malaysian scientists should be seriously involved in the field of biotechnology which could contribute towards the development of sophisticated industries that could help national economic growth.

He said they should cooperate with scientists from other countries in collecting and storing data and samples together with the genome available in Malaysia.

"We, however, have to guard our forest riches so that no one will take away plants and wildlife for research so that it will yield great benefits only for themselves."

On foreign calls for Malaysia's forests to be preserved to serve their interests, Dr Mahathir said Malaysia would not yield to such pressure particularly from non-governmental organisations (NGOs).

"We cannot yield to such pressure particularly from their NGOs which want us to maintain our forests as their carbon sink so that it can absorb the carbon dioxide which they produce in large quantities without any consideration for the needs of our people's livelihood," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the country's forests should be saved and its products extracted carefully while at the same time a reasonable area of it should be cleared to meet the needs of the people's livelihood.

"We have to extract forest resources particularly timber to develop our national economy and also to create room for our increasing population," Dr Mahathir said.

Forests were also needed as water catchment areas to generate electricity and for agriculture.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysians should develop the culture of being inquisitive for national progress and not merely depend on the research findings and inventions of others.

"A race that has these attributes...wishing to examine and study God's gifts ...will surely progress," he added.

The Prime Minister was proud over the success of many Malaysians for their inventions which won excellence awards in invention and design competitions recently.

At the function, Dr Mahathir handed over the prize to the winner of the

National Science Quiz 2001 --- Langkawi Mara Junior Science College and its three participants.

They received the Prime Minister's Challenge Trophy and a trip to Sweden to witness the Nobel Prize presentation.

-- BERNAMA

MAM LES AHH AAM