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Mahathir-Farmers

FARMERS URGED TO POOL RESOURCES AND IMPLEMENT PROJECTS

TANAH MERAH, Sept 15 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has urged farmers, livestock breeders and fishermen to change their attitude and undertake projects on a commercial basis to boost their income.

The Prime Minister said only through this way could they overcome the problem of poverty shackling them.

"Farmers should merge their land holdings into plantations so that various crops could be planted on a vast area," he said when launching the Kelantan-level Farmers, Livestock Breeders and Fishermen Day here today.

Some 20,000 people were present to hear Dr Mahathir's speech at the celebrations, held on a large scale in Kelantan by the federal government for the first time since PAS took power in the state in 1990.

Dr Mahathir said these groups should abandon their traditional ways of making a living but should instead work through the formation of companies capable of generating high incomes.

He said implementing projects on a commercial basis would not only increase income but also reduce production costs.

This was how farmers, livestock breeders and fishermen in neighbouring countries managed to increase their output and market their produce at lower prices, he said.

Dr Mahathir also urged these groups to adopt a better work culture, especially with regard to the use of their time.

He said all this while they had used only a portion of their time for work and wasted the rest without doing anything beneficial.

He suggested that they follow the working hours of workers in the public and private sectors, who work eight hours a day and only take off on weekends.

"The government wants to organise the way you (farmers, livestock breeders and fishermen) work so that you work longer hours, in a more orderly manner and through bigger estates," he said.

He said the government planned to introduce the "one village, one industry" concept to increase the income of these groups.

"Insyallah, our villagers will become rich," he said.

To achieve this aim, he said, the government provided various forms of aid like capital, and it was up to them to seize the opportunities.

Dr Mahathir said their children who had received tertiary education could return to the villages to help them manage projects on a commercial basis.

There was no reason for Malaysians to be poor as the country was blessed with good weather, fertile land and other resources which should be exploited, he said.

-- BERNAMA

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