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KUALA LANGAT, NOV. 17 (BERNAMA) -- MALAYSIA IS EXPECTED TO STEP UP ITS PALM OIL EXPORTS TO EUROPEAN COUNTRIES FOLLOWING THE MEETING OF THE ASEAN FOREIGN MINISTERS AND THEIR COUNTERPARTS IN THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY (EC) RECENTLY, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT ALTHOUGH EC COUNTRIES WERE NOT EXPECTED TO REDUCE THE DUTY ON THE COMMODITY, A WAY HAD TO BE FOUND TO STEP UP PALM OIL EXPORTS TO THESE COUNTRIES.

SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AFTER OPENING AN OLEOCHEMICAL PLANT IN TELOK PANG LIMAGARANGHERE, HE SAID REPORTS RECEIVED INDICATED THAT +RESULTS OF THE ASEAN-EC MEETING WERE QUITE GOOD.+

HE SAID THAT HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT MALAYSIA'S EFFORTS TO INCREASE PALM OIL EXPORTS WOULD BE SUCCESSFUL ALTHOUGH HE HAD NOT RECEIVED THE FULL REPORT FROM THE ASEAN DELEGATION WHICH ATTENDED THE MEETING IN DUBLIN.

FOREIGN AFFAIRS MINISTER TENGGU AHMAD RITHAUDDEEN, WHO IS CHAIRMAN OF THE ASEAN STANDING COMMITTEE, HEADED THE ASEAN DELEGATION AT THE TWO-DAY TALKS WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF 10 EC NATIONS.

AMONG THE ISSUES DISCUSSED AT THE MEETING WERE ON ECONOMIC COOPERATION, ASEAN'S REQUEST FOR 4 MORE OPEN EC MARKET, STEPPING UP OF INVESTMENTS BY EUROPEAN COUNTRIES AND 'SPEEDY IMPLEMENTATION OF AID-PROJECTS.

EARLIER, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR, IN HIS SPEECH AT THE FUNCTION, SLAMMED THE ATTITUDE OF THE MAJOR IMPORTING COUNTRIES WHICH HE SAID PRACTISED PROTECTIONISM BY DISCRIMINATING AGAINST PALM OIL EXPORTS.

HE SAID EC COUNTRIES GAVE PRIORITY TO ONLY THE IMPORT OF RAW MATERIALS FROM DEVELOPING COUNTRIES BY SLAPPING A 12 PER CENT IMPORT DUTY ON PROCESSED PALM OIL BUT ONLY 4 FOUR PER CENT IMPORT DUTY ON CRUDE PALM OIL.

THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES WANTED TO THEMSELVES PROCESS THE RAW MATERIALS SO THAT THEY COULD HAVE THE VALUE-ADDED, HE ADDED.

+ALTHOUGH THEY ALWAYS BOASTED ABOUT FREE TRADE, THEIR PRACTICES PROVED THAT THEY WERE ACTUALLY THE ONES WHO HINDER FREE TRADE,+ THE PRIME MINISTER SAID.

HE SAID THAT COOPERATION AMONG PALM OIL PRODUCERS WAS VITAL TO PROVIDE INFORMATION TO PROSPECTIVE IMPORTERS.

WITH SUCH COOPERATION COUPLED WITH GOVERNMENT EFFORTS? PALM OIL DEMAND WAS EXPECTED TO INCREASE? HE SAID.

PALM OIL EXPORTS FOR 1985 WAS EXPECTED TO INCREASE TO 3.5 MILLION TONNES COMPARED WITH THE 3.1 MILLION TONNES PROJECTED UNTIL THE: EN@ OF THIS YEAR.

HE WELCOMED THE SETTING UP OF PLANTS TO PROCESS CRUDE PALM OIL IN MALAYSIA WHICH WAS THE LARGEST PRODUCER OF THE COMMODITY, ACCOUNTING FOR 57 PER CENT OF THE WORLD OUTPUT. -- BERNAMA  
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