

# Accept Govt aid, PM tells farmers

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## VISIT HIGHLIGHTS

■ A two-hour meeting with leaders of Penang Umno. The meeting was closed to the Press but according to sources the discussion centred on ways to unite and consolidate Umno in the State.

Among those present were Penang Umno chief Anwar Ibrahim, party vice-president Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and secretary-general Datuk Seri Sanusi Junid.

■ A first-hand look at a low-cost housing project being developed on the reclaimed land at Sungai Pinang.

■ Crossing of the Penang Bridge, exactly two years after the Prime Minister declared it open and made a historic drive across it in a red Proton Saga.

In conjunction with the anniversary today, Malaysian Highway Authority officials presented key chains, caps and other gifts to lucky motorists travelling across the bridge.

BUTTERWORTH, Mon. — The Prime Minister today called on farmers and smallholders to accept Government efforts to increase productivity through proper utilisation of their resources under integrated entrepreneurships.

Disorganised and on their own, even though the Government might continue to provide them with subsidies, they would not be productive and efficient enough to compete in the open market, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

Through the integration of resources, their land, for instance, would be more economically utilised through proper planning and management.

This would bring them better incomes and a better stan-

dard of living.

While the Government has provided various infrastructure facilities in the rural areas, the farmers and smallholders must be better organised to take advantage of them.

"Government efforts to help farmers and smallholders will only be successful if they allow themselves to be organised," he said at the opening of the Integrated Agriculture Development Project (IADP) office in Seberang Jaya.

Among those present were Chief Minister Dr Lim Chong Eu, Agriculture Minister Datuk Seri Sanusi Junid, Education Minister Anwar Ibrahim, Penang Agriculture Committee chairman Dr Ibrahim Saad and Umno vice-president Datuk Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Dr Mahathir said by integrating their resources, farmers and smallholders would be able to take advantage of management expertise which they could not afford individually.

It was for this reason that big estates with good management were more efficient, productive and better able to withstand the uncertainties of fluctuating prices.

## Export market

"We don't have padi estates but think of the advantage to be gained if we plant padi as a large estate. It is because of this that I have always called for the grouping of padi fields into estates.

"The organisation into estates will not deprive anyone of his plot, instead he will stand to gain more from it," he said.

As an example, he quoted the case of pomelo growing by smallholders in the country.

He said it was all right if the growers were only thinking of the local market but they certainly would not be able to compete in the export market against a neighbouring country which grew the fruit on large plantations.

"That country is even successfully exporting the fruit to Europe and deriving immense profits from the venture," he said.

Dr Mahathir said farmers and smallholders thus had the opportunity to improve their income and standard of living through better organisation and the modernisation of their methods.

He urged them to accept the IADP-way to upgrade their productivity and livelihood.

After the opening, Dr Mahathir together with Dr Lim and Datuk Sanusi planted an arecanut tree to mark the occasion.

Later, the Prime Minister opened the new Penang Development Corporation cluster housing project nearby and visited the Agriculture Expo.