

D173

U E594 AAE
MAHATHIR-PREM
BM

KUANTAN, SEPT 19 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD AND HIS THAI COUNTERPART JEN TUN PREM TINSULANONDA LAUNCHED THE JOINT DEEP-SEA TUNA FISHING PROJECT TODAY WITH EACH DESCRIBING THE MOVE AS OPENING UP A NEW ERA IN THE FISHING INDUSTRIES OF THE TWO NATIONS.

THE TWO PRIME MINISTERS ALSO HOPED THAT THE COLLABORATION WOULD NOT ONLY STEP UP FURTHER COOPERATION IN THE FISHERIES FIELD BUT ALSO FOSTER CLOSER RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES.

SPEAKING AT THE HISTORIC EVENT AT KUANTAN PORT NEAR HERE, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE ENTREPRENEURS SHOULD NOT WORRY ABOUT GOING INTO THE FISHING INDUSTRY ON A LARGE SCALE BECAUSE IT HAD PROVEN TO BE MORE LUCRATIVE, AS HAD HAPPENED IN THAILAND.

HE SAID THAT IF THEIR COUNTERPARTS IN THE THE NEIGHBOURING COUNTRY COULD BUILD BIG FISHING VESSELS, THERE WAS NO REASON WHY THE LOCAL ENTREPRENEURS COULD NOT DO SO.

HE SAID THE LOCAL ENTREPRENEURS NEEDED TO EMULATE THE EXAMPLE OF THEIR THAI COUNTERPARTS BECAUSE ALTHOUGH THAILAND DID NOT HAVE ITS OWN TUNA FISH RESOURCES IT WAS STILL ABLE TO DEVELOP THE CANNING INDUSTRY FOR THE FISH AND BECOME AN IMPORTANT EXPORTER OF THE PRODUCT. -- MORE

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HE SAID THE LOCAL FISHERMEN HAD NOT FULLY EXPLOITED THE TUNA FISH RESOURCES IN THE EXCLUSIVE ECONOMIC ZONE (EEZ) IN THE COUNTRY'S WATERS BECAUSE MOST OF THEM STILL PRACTISED TRADITIONAL FISHING.

THE TIME HAD COME FOR THE LOCAL FISHERMEN TO CHANGE THIS IN KEEPING WITH THE CHANGES AND DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FISHERIES SECTOR, HE SAID ADDING: +WE MUST IMPROVE THE CATCHING METHODS SO AS TO INCREASE THE CATCH AND RAISE OUR INCOME.+

HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT IF THE EEZ WAS EXPLORED USING MODERN TECHNOLOGY AND EQUIPMENT, THE FISH CATCH WOULD MEET THE LOCAL DEMAND AS WELL AS FOR EXPORT.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE COUNTRY WOULD SUFFER BIG LOSSES IF THE LOCAL ENTREPRENEURS WERE NOT PREPARED TO MEET THE CHALLENGES AND GO INTO DEEP-SEA FISHING.

HE ADDED THAT ONLY A PROPORTION OF THE LOCAL ENTREPRENEURS WERE PREPARED TO INVEST IN THE FISHING INDUSTRY NOW ALTHOUGH THERE WAS POTENTIAL IN THE FIELD. -- MORE

1335MST 19 09 87

D206

U E603 AAE
MAHATHIR-PREM 3 KUANTAN

MEANWHILE, GEN TUN PREM SAID IT WAS THE THAI GOVERNMENT'S POLICY TO ENHANCE RELATIONS WITH NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES, ESPECIALLY WITH MALAYSIA IN FISHING VENTURES.

HE SAID MALAYSIA AND THAILAND HAD BEEN ENJOYING MUTUAL BENEFICIAL COOPERATION FOR A LONG TIME AND THIS SHOULD BE MAINTAINED FOR THE WELL-BEING OF THE TWO COUNTRIES.

GEN TUN PREM URGED THAI FISHERMEN INVOLVED IN THE PROJECT TO WORK SINCERELY AS FUTURE COOPERATION BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES IN THE FISHING INDUSTRY WOULD DEPEND ON THE SUCCESS OF THIS PROJECT.

EARLIER, AGRICULTURE MINISTER DATUK SERI SANUSI JUNID SAID IT WAS THE MINISTRY'S HOPE THAT MALAYSIA WOULD SOON TURN FROM AN IMPORTER TO EXPORTER OF FISH.

TO ACHIEVE THIS, MORE ENTREPRENEURS SHOULD INVEST IN THE FISHING INDUSTRY. -- MORE

1514MST 19 09 87

D208

U E604 AAE
MAHATHIR-PREM 4 Kuantan

HE SAID EVEN THOUGH THE MINISTRY HAD ISSUED 317 FISHING LICENCES SINCE 1986, ONLY 51 BOATS WERE OPERATING.

DATUK SERI SANUSI SAID SKILLED MANPOWER WAS NEEDED TO UPGRADE THE FISHING INDUSTRY BUT HE LAMENTED THAT LOCAL YOUTHS WERE STILL NOT TOO KEEN TO ATTEND TRAINING PROGRAMMES ORGANISED BY THE MINISTRY.

BECAUSE OF THIS, EXPERTS HAD TO BE +BORROWED+ FROM THAILAND TO ENSURE THE SUCCESS OF THE JOINT VENTURE PROJECT, HE SAID, ADDING THAT ABOUT 50 YOUTHS HAD SO FAR REGISTERED WITH THE COMPANY UNDERTAKING THE PROJECT.

+IF A COUNTRY HAS ITS OWN SKILLED WORKERS, FOREIGN MANPOWER WOULD DEFINITELY NOT BE NEEDED,+ HE SAID.

GEN TUN PREM AND DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR LATER LAUNCHED 40 DEEPSEA FISHING BOATS OF BETWEEN 70 AND 200 GRT AT THE CEREMONY.

THE BOATS COSTING \$800,000 EACH SET OUT TO SEA TO BEGIN THEIR FISH-CATCHING OPERATION. -- BERNAMA

1518MST 19 09 87