

B E751 A A E
MAHATHIR-AGRICULTURE
BM

KUALA LUMPUR, DEC 2 (BERNAMA) -- MALAYSIA'S AGRICULTURAL SECTOR MUST BE WILLING TO PIONEER NEW APPROACHES TOWARDS BECOMING A MODERN AND EXPORT-ORIENTED AGRO INDUSTRY TO REPLACE TRADITIONAL FARMING, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TONIGHT.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL APPROACHES MUST BE DIRECTED TOWARDS AGRICULTURAL EFFORTS ON A NATIONAL BASIS AND MARKETING AT A GLOBAL LEVEL.

ADDRESSING A +MALAMPERTANIAN+ DINNER HERE, HE SAID THE COUNTRY'S 16 MILLION POPULATION NEEDED A SUFFICIENT AND PERMANENT SUPPLY OF FOOD AND FOOD PRODUCTION WOULD DEFINITELY HAVE TO BE A MAJOR AND SOPHISTICATED INDUSTRY.

THE COUNTRY REQUIRED AGRICULTURE ON A LARGE SCALE TO MEET THE NEEDS OF A LARGE AND MODERN SOCIETY AS TRADITIONAL FARMING AND TRADITIONAL FARMERS WERE NO LONGER ABLE TO FULFIL THEIR RESPONSIBILITY AS SUPPLIERS OF FOOD.

HE CAUTIONED THE PEOPLE HOWEVER AGAINST BEING MISLED BY THE THINKING THAT THE SWITCH FROM TRADITIONAL TO MODERN FARMING WOULD BY ITSELF BRING SUCCESS -- SUFFICIENT PREPARATIONS HAD TO BE MADE TO ENSURE THE SUCCESS OF THE SWITCH. -- MORE

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B E752 AAE
MAHATHIR-AGRICULTURE 2 KUALA LUMPUR

HE SAID THE COUNTRY'S AGRICULTURAL SECTOR NEEDED TRAINED PEOPLE ESPECIALLY IN MANAGEMENT AS AGRICULTURE WAS NOW NO LONGER FOR THE SIMPLE FARMER.

THE INVOLVEMENT OF THE INTELLIGENTSIA AS WELL AS FISHERMEN AND FARMER LEADERS WAS SIGNIFICANT TO BRING ABOUT THE NECESSARY CHANGES IN THE SECTOR WITHOUT DETRIMENT TO THE INTERESTS OF TRADITIONAL FARMERS AND FISHERMEN.

THE PRIME MINISTER STRESSED THAT ONLY WITH A SYSTEMATIC AND COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH COULD SUCCESS BE ACHIEVED? ADDING THAT FOR EXPORT PURPOSES, THE COUNTRY NEEDED AN AGRO INDUSTRY STRUCTURED LIKE THE RUBBER AND OIL PALM SECTORS.

HE SAID HOWEVER THAT ALTHOUGH COUNTRY REQUIRED A MODERN AND LARGE-SCALE AGROINDUSTRY, THE SUPPLANTING OF TRADITIONAL FARMING BY MODERN METHODS WOULD UNFORTUNATELY SEVER THE SOURCE OF INCOME OF TRADITIONAL FARMERS AND FISHERMEN.

+THIS IS OUR DILEMMA. IF WE WANT THE SECTOR TO BE EXPORT-ORIENTED, OUR AGRICULTURAL OUTPUT MIGHT NOT BE SUCCESSFUL AS LONG AS AS WE REMAIN A TRADITIONAL AGRICULTURAL SYSTEM,+ HE SAID. -- MORE

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B E753 AAE
MAHATHIR-AGRICULTURE 3 KUALA LUMPUR

HE SAID THE SOONER TRADITIONAL FARMERS AND FISHERMEN ACCEPTED MODERN METHODS AND CHANGES, THE SOONER THEIR FATE WOULD CHANGE FOR THE BETTER.

THE GOVERNMENT WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO REDUCE POVERTY AMONG FISHERMEN AS LONG AS AS THEY STICK TO TRADITIONAL FISHING TECHNIQUES OR CONFINE THEIR EFFORTS TO RIVERS AND COASTAL WATERS.

THE, PRIME MINISTER SAID THE PEOPLE SHOULD NOT BLAME ANYONE FOR FAILURE IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR BECAUSE THEY HAD THE POWER TO DETERMINE POLICIES AND ACTIONS IN THE COUNTRY.

+ONE OF THE REASONS WHY MALAYSIA HAS NOT BEEN THAT SUCCESSFUL IN AGRICULTURE AND FISHERIES, WITH THE EXCEPTION OF RUBBER AND PALM OIL, IS THAT WE DO NOT SEE FARMING AS A COMMERCIAL ACTIVITY BUT ONLY AN OCCUPATION TO MEET THE NEEDS OF OTHER COUNTRIES FOR OUR PRODUCE,+ HE SAID.

+BUT NOW, OUR EYES ARE OPENED TO THE POTENTIAL IN AGRICULTURE. IF WE DO NOT GRAB THE OPPORTUNITY PRESENTED OR FAIL TO MAKE OUR AGRO INDUSTRY A SUCCESS, WE HAVE ONLY OURSELVES TO BLAME.+ -- MORE
2227MST 02 12 07

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B E754 AAE
MAHATHIR-AGRICULTURE 4 KUALA LUMPUR

IN THIS CONNECTION, THE PEOPLE MUST IDENTIFY AND ANALYSE THE REASONS WHY THE OPPORTUNITIES AND POTENTIAL AVAILABLE WERE NOT FULLY EXPLOITED, AND THINK ABOUT EXPORT AND THE WORLD MARKET.

+OUR AGRO INDUSTRY WILL NEVER GROW FOR AS LONG AS WE PRACTISE FARMING AS A SMALL-SCALE ACTIVITY INVOLVING ONLY TRADITIONAL FARMERS,+ HE SAID.

HE SAID MALAYSIA WAS FORTUNATE TO HAVE BEEN BLESSED WITH FERTILE SOIL AND A FAVOURABLE CLIMATE AND, APART FROM THE FLOODS WHICH OCCURRED ONCE IN A WHILE BUT DID NOT BRING WIDESCALE DAMAGE, WAS FREE FROM MAJOR NATURAL DISASTERS SUCH AS EARTHQUAKES, TYPHOONS AND VOLCANOES.

THESE FACTORS SHOULD BY THEMSELVES MAKE THE PEOPLE MORE COMPETITIVE, HE ADDED.

IN THE FISHERIES SECTOR, DATUKSERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE COUNTRY'S WATERS WERE A SOURCE OF NATIONAL WEALTH AND THE PEOPLE ONLY RECENTLY REALISED THIS WHEN FOREIGNERS HAD FOR YEARS BEEN REAPING RICH HARVESTS FROM THESE WATERS.

+WE GET ANGRY AT THE FOREIGNERS, BUT WE OURSELVES DO NOT HAVE THE CAPABILITY OR THE INTEREST TO EXPLOIT THE RESOURCES.+ -- MORE
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B E755 AAE
MAHATHIR-AGRICULTURE 5 KUALA LUMPUR

+THE FORMATION OF THE DEEPSEA FISHERMEN'S MOVEMENT TO VENTURE AGGRESSIVELY INTO THIS FIELD SOON WILL BRING MANY BENEFITS TO THE FISHERMEN AND THE COUNTRY,+ HE SAID.

HE ALSO SAID IT WAS NOT IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE COUNTRY TO PRODUCE ALL THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF MEAT FOR DOMESTIC NEEDS AND EXPORT AS ITS LIVESTOCK INDUSTRY WAS NOT CONFINED TO THE REARING OF ONLY CHICKEN, DUCKS, SHEEP AND CATTLE.

THE COUNTRY COULD ALSO PRODUCE OTHER KINDS OF MEAT SUCH AS VENISON, RABBIT AND PROBABLY TURKEY. -- BERNAMA
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