

Time to discard age-old practices

Think big in agriculture, PM urges

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KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. — The Prime Minister tonight called for the modernisation of the agricultural sector with commercialised estates for food and other cash crops.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said it was time Malaysians discarded the age-old practice of subsistence agriculture and began to "think big" as the sector held great promise as a dollar-earner.

He said the country now had a large domestic market as there were 16 million people.

He suggested that a "national" approach be adopted when commercialising agri-

culture but marketing of produce should be "global".

Dr Mahathir was speaking at *Malam* Pertanian Negara at Putra World Trade Centre here.

Improve

Calling on fishermen to discard the traditional methods of fishing, he said they would not be able to overcome poverty as long as they stuck to old methods or limit their scope to riverine or coastal waters.

"Actually, those who defend the traditional way of life are doing the fishermen a disservice," he said.

"Those who are overly

sympathetic to traditional fishermen are actually impeding their progress. The earlier they accept modern methods and changes; the faster their lot will be improved. It is also the same with other sectors."

He said that agriculture was no longer a field of activity for "peasants" in a modern Malaysia.

He called on intellectuals and leaders of farmers and fishermen to bring about this change without affecting the interests of traditional farmers and fishermen.

"With so many educated people jobless now, this is the time to make the change," he said.