

Dr Mahathir suggests Mardi idea be adopted nationwide

Fast-food system for stalls



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SERDANG, Thurs. — The Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute (Mardi) has developed a food retailing system for use by stall operators which should be introduced nationwide, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said the self-service system would ensure that the public could enjoy wide varieties of food at such stalls in a clean environment.

Dr Mahathir spent half a morning at the Biotechnology Centre and Food Technology Department of Mardi and sampled some of the food prepared by Mardi staff.

Dr Mahathir said he would recommend this concept to all State Governments and Local Governments for use by stall operators. "Whether they accept this concept or not will depend on them," he told reporters after the visit.

The Prime Minister also advocated the idea of a central kitchen system where certain types of popular food could be distributed to retail outlets. This system will also benefit stall operators without culinary skills.

Using this system, food can be distributed from the central kitchen to retail outlets which can then just warm the food and serve to waiting customers.

Using the system developed by Mardi, stall operators can sell local fast food such as mee, laksa and "nasi

beriani" from an integrated stall unit.

In this way, a particular food could be made available in many places, Dr Mahathir added.

He said Mardi's efforts in designing the stall and the self-service system should not be wasted. Under this system, the public can choose the type of food and drinks they want quickly and make immediate payments.

But he said that despite many good ideas derived from research, their acceptability and adoption by the people continued to be a problem.

Dr Mahathir said some people still preferred the old ways and did not want a change. If this situation persisted, then these people would be left behind.

Dr Mahathir said foreign fast food outlets selling hot-dogs and hamburgers had gained popularity among Malaysians. They have become popular and gained the people's confidence because of their modern marketing approach.

"We have equally tasteful and popular food but these are confined to roadside stalls," he said.

The Prime Minister hoped research by Mardi would bring the standard of roadside hawkers to a higher level.

Asked about the large number of Indonesians getting a stronger hold in the small-scale food business, Dr Mahathir said local retailers had not improved their enterprises.