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Mahathir-agro

AGRO SECTOR MUST BACK UP ECONOMY, SAYS MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, June 11 (Bernama) -- Malaysia must strive to achieve greater excellence in research and development of new agricultural industries from primary commodities and natural resources, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

Developing new industries from the country's rich natural resources would assist in national industrialisation, he said.

At the same time, he said, developing new high value products from agricultural commodities as well as agricultural waste and by-products would further improve Malaysia's productivity and global competitiveness.

Creating new markets for the products would assure the sector of continued significant contribution to export earnings, he said in a message in the Third National Agricultural Policy paper.

The agricultural "white paper," which outlined policies through to 2010, was launched by Agriculture Minister Datuk Amar Dr Sulaiman Daud Tuesday.

Copies of the publication were made available to the public yesterday.

Dr Mahathir said increasing output of key food products would enhance food security and enable Malaysians better access to quality food at affordable prices.

Achieving excellence in agriculture would require human resource development, especially in new and emerging areas of agricultural science as well as training professional farm managers to run large-scale mixed-farming enterprises.

Dr Mahathir said the Government had always provided the environment for agricultural development to be private sector-driven and thus, the sector's continued active participation was essential.

He said the public sector would facilitate support services to the private sector enterprises, farmers and fishermen to achieve their business and income objectives.

"Likewise, state governments have to play a prominent role to support private sector needs as land is under their purview," he added.

-- BERNAMA

GM RYN