

20 APR 2001

Mahathir-Thailand

THAI ASSISTANCE MUCH APPRECIATED, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

TUMPAT, April 20 (Bernama) -- Thailand's help in coming up with much lighter ploughing and padi harvesting machines used in Kelantan is much appreciated, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The machines are used in the Kemubu Agricultural Development Authority (Kada) area.

"It is a good example of a neighbour helping another. Hopefully, next time Malaysia can help Thailand," he said during a visit to the Merdeka Ana plantation here today.

A Thai company has produced 30 ploughing machines and two padi harvesters for use in the Kada area.

Ploughing machines and padi harvesters imported from other countries have been found to be too heavy and unsuitable to be used in the Kada padi fields.

Dr Mahathir said efforts to merge small-sized padi plots, which are uneconomical to run, into plantations must be expedited.

He said the merged plots can then be professionally run and modern technology employed to improve the income of farmers.

He again took to task those involved in instigating padi farmers in Kedah to demonstrate to seek a doubling in the price of padi in order to raise their income.

"The poor will be badly affected if the price of padi is increased. Instead, the farmers should increase production to raise their income," said Dr Mahathir.

Dr Mahathir also presented dividends amounting to RM360,000 under the Kada group farming programme to representatives of some 1,700 Kada padi farmers.

Kada chairman Tan Sri Hussein Ahmad, meanwhile, said the machines bought from Thailand cost about RM20,000 each compared to the RM100,000 each price tag for machines imported from other countries.

-- BERNAMA

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