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Mahathir-Agriculture

NO REASON FOR FARMERS AND FISHERMEN TO BE POOR, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 1 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today there is no reason for the farmers, livestock breeders and fishermen to be poor because they now have vast opportunities to increase their income.

For example, the prime minister said, the government would implement the "One Village One Industry" programme which emphasised the food processing industry in efforts to increase food production in the country and their income.

The programme, which is similar to the "One Village One Product" approach, required the farmers, livestock breeders and fishermen to learn new methods to raise their productivity, he said when launching the Malaysian Agriculture, Horticulture and Agro-tourism (Maha) Show 2002 at The Mines Exhibition and Conference Centre, near here.

Dr Mahathir said that with a small capital and willingness to work hard, this group could raise their income and the problem of poverty would not recur.

Dr Mahathir said that the 2003 Budget focused on the agricultural sector with the hope that it could be modernised and expanded and participated by trained people who could jointly develop it.

The country had to produce its own food for food security and new technologies and modern production methods must be adopted to beat the diminishing land and manpower for this sector, he said.

Farmers with small plots should merge their farms to raise their earnings.

The prime minister also called on the farmers, livestock breeders and fishermen with lots of free time to put it to good use by working eight-hour days, six days a week to further raise their yield.

"In this way they not only increase their income but also become healthy beings," he said.

He also presented awards to successful farmers, livestock breeders and fishermen.

-- BERNAMA

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