

# It's not back-peddalling, says PM on Green Book

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KAJANG, Fri. — The Government's focus on agriculture and the launch of the Green Book campaign should not be viewed as back-peddalling or retrogressive.

Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said he had been asked by various quarters why the Government was so focused on agriculture when Malaysia was already an industrial country and advanced in information and communications technology.

"They ask me: 'Isn't this Green Book an old story? Why we *gostan*?' (back-pedal)". I tell them we want to increase our food production. Our food import is still high. This way, we can reduce our huge food import costs and be self-reliant.

"We can increase our income. This is especially important in these times, when the price of petrol has increased. We need to make changes to the way we manage our expenses and one of the ways is to turn to agriculture. It can also bring in part-time income," said the Prime Minister.

In launching the national-level Green Book campaign at Taman Seri Nanding here today, Abdullah hoped people would set aside their perception that there were less than encouraging prospects in the agricultural sector, and view it as profitable.

The campaign, themed "Plant, Rear for Self-Consumption, Save for Economic Development", encourages the people to create an "edible landscape" and "community gardens". They are urged to grow their own vegetables and rear chicken and fish for their daily needs.

This plan was also promoted by the country's second Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak Hussein.

Abdullah stressed, however, that the campaign should not be construed as the main thrust of the country's agricultural policy. "It is just one of our many ways to promote agriculture."

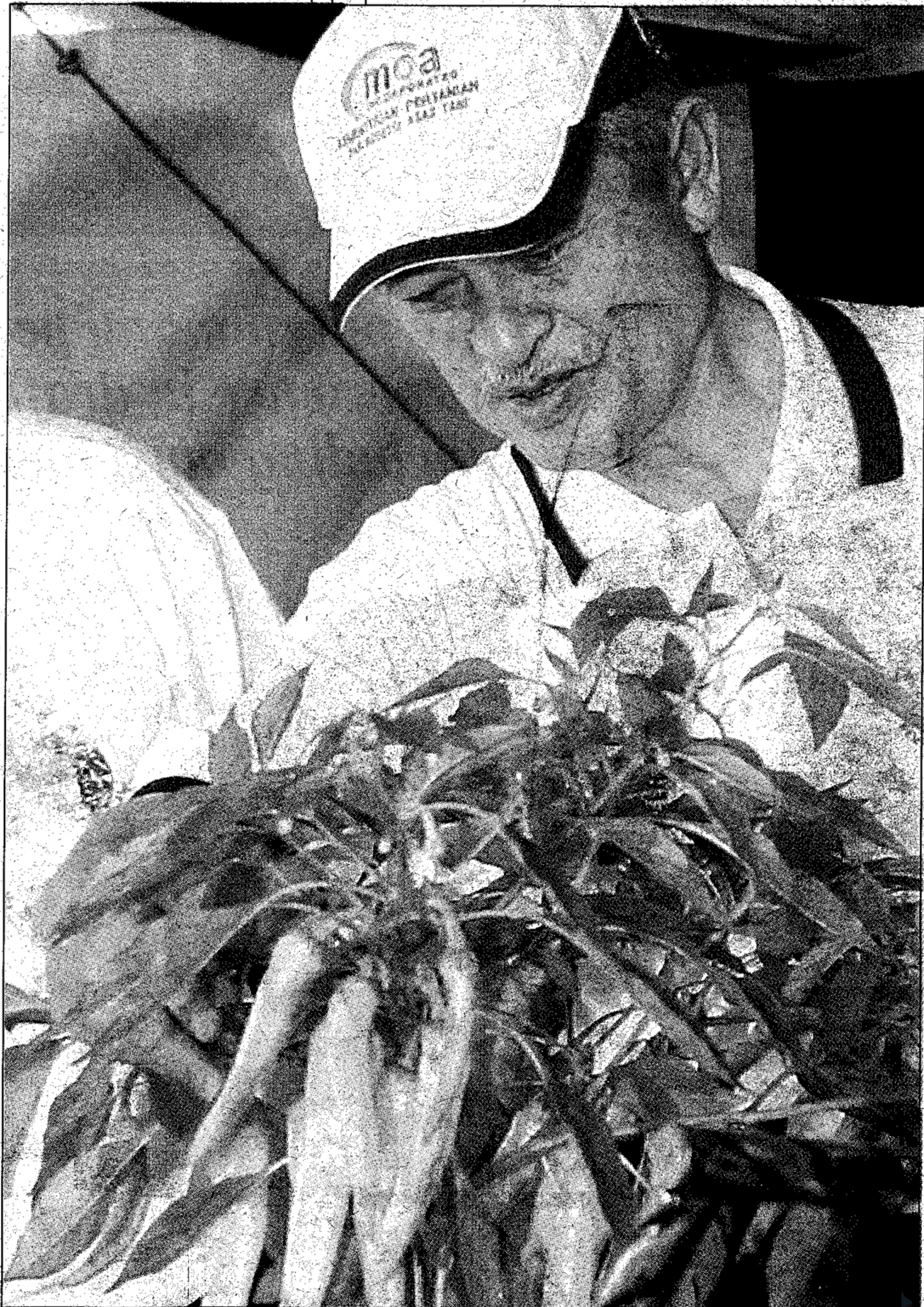
Abdullah said under the Ninth Malaysia Plan, new methods of farming using biotechnology and ICT would be introduced.

At a Press conference later, Abdullah said traders should not take advantage of the increase in petrol price.

"We don't want and won't tolerate profiteering. If traders cannot justify their price increase, we will take action."

When told that a glass of *teh tarik* now cost RM1.20 in some places, Abdullah said he could not comprehend how that could be when the price of sugar had gone up by only a few sen.

"Is it reasonable for a glass of *teh tarik* to cost that much when one kilogramme of sugar can go towards the preparation of numerous glasses of tea?"



**GREEN FINGERS:** Abdullah taking a close look at a chilli plant during the launch of the Green Book campaign at Taman Seri Nanding.