

Najib Announces RM7 Mln Grants For Farmers, Breeders, Fishermen

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SERDANG, Sept 28 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak today announced one-off grants of RM30,000 for every Area Farmers Organisation and Area Fishermen's Organisation.

He said the grants, totalling RM7 million, would benefit one million farmers, breeders and fishermen who were members of these organisations.

The grant was provided in appreciation of the efforts of those who supplied the nation's food, he said when launching the National Farmers, Breeders and Fishermen's Day 2017 (HPPNK2017) and Malaysia Food Festival at the Malaysia Agro Exposition Park Serdang here.

Najib's wife, Datin Seri Rosmah Mansor, and Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Shabery Cheek were also present at the opening of the four-day HPPNK2017 which has the theme 'Our Food, Our Future'.

"Toiling as farmers, breeders and fishermen to provide the people with food is a noble task and the contribution of these groups of people, who are dear to me, must be honoured," Najib said.

The Prime Minister said the agriculture and agro-food sector contributed RM89.3 billion and RM36.5 billion, respectively, to the Gross Domestic Product in 2016.

He also said that the production of major food commodities such as paddy, vegetables, fruits, meat and fish registered an encouraging growth of 3.9 per cent per annum from 2011 to 2016.

Najib, who is also the Finance Minister, said the grants, which had been approved by the Finance Ministry, would revitalise the leadership of area farmers and fishermen's organisations to bring further development to the respective sectors.

The country has 278 area farmers organisations and 88 area fishermen's organisations.

The Prime Minister said agricultural industry players had to adopt a global view and create wealth through the sector instead of just remaining at the local level and regarding farming, breeding livestock and fishing as being enough just to survive.

Although the potential of the agricultural industry had yet to be fully realised, the seeds of success were evident due to the global demand for durian, bird nests, herbs and seaweed which had become the country's premium products, he said.

Najib said his visits to China had opened up a new market for agricultural products, especially for the durian that had been allowed to be exported there, besides attracting investments to the tune of RM144 billion to Malaysia.

He said that during one of his visits, he personally asked Chinese leaders to allow Malaysia's export of durian to China which, he added, resulted in traders of the 'Musang King' variety of durian harvesting huge profits when the export value exceeded RM100 per kg.

The success deflected the slander by the political opposition that he had sold off the country's sovereignty when his visits had actually yielded benefits for the people, he said.

Citing the East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) as an example, Najib said a railway line traversing Kelantan, Terengganu and Pahang would greatly benefit farmers, livestock breeders and fishermen in exporting their products.

"With a modern and efficient logistics system, the distribution of agricultural products by farmers, livestock breeders and fishermen would not have to be made through middle-men, thus enabling the producers to reap higher profits," he said.

Najib said the ECRL development was also expected to help boost the economy of the East Coast by 1.5 per cent per annum due to increased purchasing power.

"The benefits of good relations with the economic power is not talked about by the political opposition, but our intention is clear - that is to become a global supply chain. We will bring many benefits to the farmers, livestock breeders and fishermen," he said.

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