

**By : DATO' SRI MOHD NAJIB BIN TUN HAJI ABDUL RAZAK
PERDANA MENTERI MALAYSIA**

Venue : Jalan Sultan Gate, Singapore

Date : 27/08/2014

Title : THE LAUNCH OF AGROBAZAAR MALAYSIA

Bismillahirrahmanirrahim.

Assalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh dan Good Evening,

His Excellency Lee Hsien Loong;

Prime Minister of Singapore,

Representatives of the Governments;

Distinguished guests;

Ladies and gentlemen.

1. It is a great pleasure to join you tonight for the official launch of Agrobazaar Malaysia in Singapore.
2. The Bazaar aims to bring the best of Malaysian produce to some of the most discerning consumers in Asia. Given the superb quality of our fresh fruits, and the high calibre of Singapore's eateries, I'm sure it will be a lasting success.

3. For outsiders, our fruits are some of South East Asia's most iconic attractions. Yes, we have historic cities, idyllic beaches, and world-famous temples. But our rambutan, mangosteen – and above all, durian – really pull in the crowds.

4. There is something about durian in particular which captivates visitors to South East Asia. Mostly they laugh at the 'no durian' stickers in our hotels, and recoil from the roadside stall selling D24. But some form a lifelong love affair with the king of fruits – which must be difficult if you live in New Zealand or Alaska.

5. As a proud Malaysian, I always do my part to ensure such visitors get their fix. In fact, I get to served world leaders durian!

6. In seriousness, we should be proud of our most distinctive exports. From the beautiful star fruit to the pomelos of Perak, our fruits hint at Malaysia itself; lush and tropical, flavoursome and diverse. And so they are a perfect vehicle to introduce people to our cuisine, our culture, and our customs.

7. This Agro Bazaar will help us to do just that. I can think of few better places than Singapore, which attracts so many international visitors, and which we share a common culinary heritage with. We may occasionally differ on terminology, but Singaporeans and Malaysians taste with one tongue.

8. That explains why a fifth of our agro-food products – worth more than a billion US dollars – are exported to Singapore annually. And with the kind of co-operation we see here at the Agro Bazaar, I am sure those numbers will continue to rise.

9. The global food industry has undergone huge change, as air travel and the internet bring once remote food cultures closer together. Today, you can buy keropok in Buenos Aires, and durian on Ebay.

10. To ensure traditional production methods survive, our farmers and food producers – many of whom are small or medium sized enterprises – must be able to plug into multinational supply chains.

11. From this perspective, the Agro Bazaar, a permanent platform for Malaysian produce in another country, will help: providing a platform to bring more produce direct from farms, a space in which to promote Malaysian products, and a jumping-off point for Malaysian producers to access new international markets. It will allow Malaysia's premium food items – not just fruit, but halal foods, and regional specialties – a place to shine.

12. It is also a testament to the strong and enduring relationship between Malaysia and Singapore.

13. This project would not have succeeded without continuous support from the government and businesses of Singapore. Now we hope that the people of Singapore – adventurous, and hungry for new food and travel experiences – also get behind the Agro Bazaar concept; and that the success founded here will be repeated in other projects around the world.

14. On behalf of the people and producers of Malaysia, I wish to thank everyone who has worked hard to bring the Agro Bazaar project to fruition. And with that, let me handover to my friend and colleague, Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong.

Thank you.

Wabillahitaufiq Walhidayah Wassalamualaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh.