



LAPORAN LIPUTAN MEDIA

AHAD / 2 JUN 2019

- 1. LUAHAN PESAWAH DAPAT PERHATIAN**
 - **MINGGUAN MALAYSIA**
- 2. HARUMANIS TAKES ROOT IN KEDAH**
 - **NEW SUNDAY TIMES**
- 3. THE WAY FORWARD FOR AGRICULTURE**
 - **NEW SUNDAY TIMES**
- 4. NEW VENTURE AGRICULTURE**
 - **NEW SUNDAY TIMES**

DISEDIAKAN OLEH :

CAWANGAN KOMUNIKASI KORPORAT

(MADA)

TARIKH : 2 JUN 2019

PERKARA : PERTANIAN

MINGGUAN MALAYSIA • AHAD 2 JUN 2019

Luahan pesawah dapat perhatian

Oleh MOHD. HAFIZ ABD. MUTALIB
utusanperlis@utusan.com.my

■ KANGAR 1 JUN

LUAHAN para pesawah di Utan Aji di sini yang terpaksa menghidu bau busuk di kawasan itu sejak lima tahun lalu mendapat perhatian Perbadanan Pengurusan Sisa Pepejal dan Pembersihan Awam (SWCorp) yang melakukakan kerja-kerja pembersihan di lokasi tersebut pada Khamis dan semalam.

Dalam masa sama, Pengarahnya, Mohd. Hidy Md. Dzahir berkata, pihaknya juga akan menjalankan penguatkuasaan secara berkala di lokasi tersebut bagi mencegah perbuatan tidak bertanggungjawab segelintir pihak.

Beliau berkata, masalah tersebut berpunca daripada sikap tidak bertanggungjawab segelintir penduduk dan juga kontraktor yang sering mengambil jalan mudah membuang sampah di lokasi itu tanpa memikirkan kesan terhadap orang awam serta persekitarannya.

Katanya, berdasarkan aduan yang diterima, pihaknya bersama Lembaga Kemajuan Pertanian Muda (MADA) telah ke lokasi berkenaan pada 29 Mei lalu dan mendapati kawasan tersebut berada di atas rezab tanah milik agensi itu.

"Tinjauan dan siasatan yang dibuat di lokasi tersebut mendapati jenis sampah yang dibuang adalah daripada sisa domestik, kebun dan lebihan sisa binaan. Hasil daripada pemerhatian, kita juga mendapati tiada fasiliti tong sampah yang disediakan bagi kemudahan penduduk



KERATAN Utusan Malaysia 29 Mei mengenai rungutan pesawah di Utan Aji, Kangar, Perlis.

Dalam tempoh itu, bukan sahaja mereka mengalami gangguan psikologi setiap hari, tetapi lebih malang perbuatan pihak berkenaan telah mengakibatkan kawasan per-

tanian seluas 50 hektar itu kerap diserang makhluk perosak seperti tikus.

Berikutan padi yang dirosakkan tikus, mereka terpaksa menanggung kerugian mencecah puluhan ribu ringgit setiap kali musim penanaman.

Sementara itu, Mohd. Hidy menasihatkan para penduduk dan kontraktor supaya tidak membuang sampah di tempat yang tidak dibenarkan kerana tindakan itu adalah satu kesalahan di bawah Akta Pengurusan Sisa Pepejal dan Pembersihan Awam 2007 (Akta 672).

"Mereka yang disabitkan kesalahan boleh dikenakan denda tidak kurang daripada RM10,000 dan tidak melebihi RM100,000 atau dipenjarakan selama tempoh tidak kurang daripada enam bulan dan tidak melebihi lima tahun atau kedua-duanya," katanya.

membuang sampah di kawasan tersebut.

"Bagaimanapun perkara tersebut bukanlah alasan untuk penduduk membuang sampah. Sikap negatif itu yang menyebabkan kawasan itu menjadi kotor dan juga menjejaskan kawasan pertanian di lokasi tersebut.

"Pihak MADA memaklumkan kerja-kerja pembersihan sampah haram di lokasi tersebut telah dilakukan pada 30 dan 31 Mei lalu dan seterusnya penguatkuasaan akan dijalankan secara berkala di lokasi tersebut oleh pihak SWCorp," katanya dalam kenyataan di sini hari ini.

Baru-baru ini, *Utusan Malaysia* melaporkan seramai 30 orang pesawah di Utan Aji di sini terpaksa menghidu bau busuk sejak lima tahun lalu ekoran sikap tidak bertanggungjawab pihak tertentu yang melonggokkan sisa sampah di kawasan itu.

NewSundayTimes • JUNE 2, 2019

12 | NEWS



'KING OF ALL MANGOES'

HARUMANIS TAKES ROOT IN KEDAH

Many people think the mango variant is grown only in Perlis. But Kedah farmers have gotten into the act, too, writes **AUDREY DERMAWAN**

IT is that time of the year when harumanis are in full bloom and "hantu mangga" (mango diehards) go out of their way in search of the "king of all mangoes".

And one cannot be faulted for thinking that the mango — green in colour with a sweet smell and taste, hence its name — can only be found in the country's tiniest state, Perlis, near the Malaysian-Thailand border, as often reported.

Early this month, just like many others, I fixed my craving for harumanis, courtesy of a colleague who was willing to drive up north to buy the fruit.

Harumanis mangoes are botanically classified as *mangifera indica*, a popular Indonesian mango variety.

However, contrary to popular belief that the fruit is grown only in Perlis, the mango variant is fast gaining traction among farmers in neighbouring Kedah, the nation's rice bowl.

According to statistics provid-

ed by the Kedah Harum Manis Association, about 100 farmers in the state have since ventured into planting harumanis in the last five years on a 72ha site, which is equivalent to 72 football fields.

These farmers are mainly located in Padang Terap and Kubang Pasu.

The aim is to expand the growth area from 72ha to 2,500ha in the years to come, overtaking Perlis' current growth area of about 1,200ha.

Association chairman Othman Ismail said it was not Kedah's intention to compete with Perlis, but to complement the latter's efforts in meeting the ever-growing demand.

Othman, who has 100 harumanis trees, of which 60 saw the first harvest this year, collected one tonne or about 3,000 harumanis mangoes this season.

"There is no difference between the harumanis grown in Perlis and those harvested in Kedah.

"They are one and the same — smell sweet and taste just as sweet.

"The limestone and sandy soil in Perlis is also available here in Kedah.

"The only marked difference is the humid temperature in the states. Kedah is about 1° or 2°C lower.

"So it is not true that harumanis can only be grown in Perlis.

"We have proved that it can be grown just as successfully here in Kedah," said the former Malaysian Agricultural Research and Development Institute officer.

Othman said the harumanis "craze" started in Kedah among old-time padi farmers who wanted to "try their luck" after seeing how their counterparts in Perlis did it with the mango variant. They went on to create a name for themselves even on the international stage.

Since this year, harumanis has become a flourishing business, but it is still not sufficient to meet local market demand.

"We have farmers expressing an interest to grow harumanis. We have to help them by imparting the right knowledge.

"The challenge is not so much about growing the tree, but how to do it right to get premium qual-



Harumanis is fast gaining traction among farmers in Kedah. **BY AUDREY DERMAWAN**

ity mangoes, which are much sought-after."

Met at his 14ha farm in Malau, farmer Adzif Saad, 58, proudly showed off his 250 harumanis trees, the majority of which had borne fruits for the first time this season.

He said the first harvest was usually low and as the tree matured, the fruit would grow in abundance.

"This season, I collected one tonne of mangoes, which is considerably good.

"The fruits, which have orange flesh, are of decent size.

"I have asked my friends, including those in the Klang Valley, to sample the fruits.

"So far, I have not received any negative feedback.

"Next year, when the yield is better, those who had tasted the fruit can come and buy from me."

During a tour of his farm, Adzif showed me how he used special papers to wrap the almost-ripe fruits before they could be plucked.

Altogether, he spent close to RM500,000 to buy the land and prepare the amenities needed for the farm, including the irrigation system.

"It is not easy. A lot of time is needed to tend to the trees from the time the flowers bloom until the fruits ripen.

"After that, we have to prune the trees until the next season.

"What worries us is the threat of insidious fruit ripening diseases."

Besides harumanis, he also grows *durian belanda* (sourp) and bananas. He also breeds stingless bees (*surang kelulut*) and goats.

About an hour's drive along the narrow village roads from Adzif's farm is award-winning padi farmer Jaafar Zakaria's farm in Sanglang.

Known for his "green fingers", the 46-year-old expects his 30 harumanis trees to yield one tonne of fruits before the end of the season.

His trees are wrapped in either white or brown papers, indicating the abundance of fruits waiting to be harvested.

"I need to meet a 100kg demand this Hari Raya Aidilfitri," said a smiling Jaafar.

His farm is next to the padi farm, which is submerged in water, lending a panoramic view to the kampung life.

This is the second time his trees have borne fruits and he has planted an additional 80 trees, which are expected to bear fruit in two to three years.

"I am able to make RM20,000 each season."

Sharing insights into his success, Jaafar said only fruits which were mature and ripe should be plucked to ensure their sweetness and quality.

"Once the mango skin is no



Adzif Saad (right) and Kedah Harum Manis Association chairman Othman Ismail showing the harumanis in the former's farm in Malau, Alor Star, recently.



per sunken and the branch is
wn, then it is fully ripe," he
l while opening the papered
ered mangoes to show what
neant.
e said it took about three
ths from the flowering pro-
to the full ripening of the
s.
is a tedious and long pro-
but a fulfilling one at the
of the day.

"So yes, I believe harumanis
can be grown just about any-
where.
"It depends on how one takes
care of the trees," he said, adding
that he planned to turn his farm
into a homestay to enable people
to enjoy kampung life while
savouring harumanis.
Two years ago, Jaafar was
awarded the Asean Rice Science
and Technology Ambassadors

award for his hard work and com-
mitment in increasing rice pro-
ductivity, in conjunction with
Asean's 50th anniversary celebra-
tion.
He was the only Malaysian
farmer to receive such a recog-
nition.
Othman, Adzif and Jaafar's
Harum Manis saplings are
sourced from Perlis. The fruits
are sold at RM20 per kg.



Zakaria showing the almost-ripe harumanis at his farm in Sanglang, Kedah.



Kedah Federal Agricultural Marketing Authority deputy director (operations) Hasrol Nizam Muhammad Zuki says more than 90 farmers are planting harumanis in the state.

'One tree can generate RM10,000 income a season'

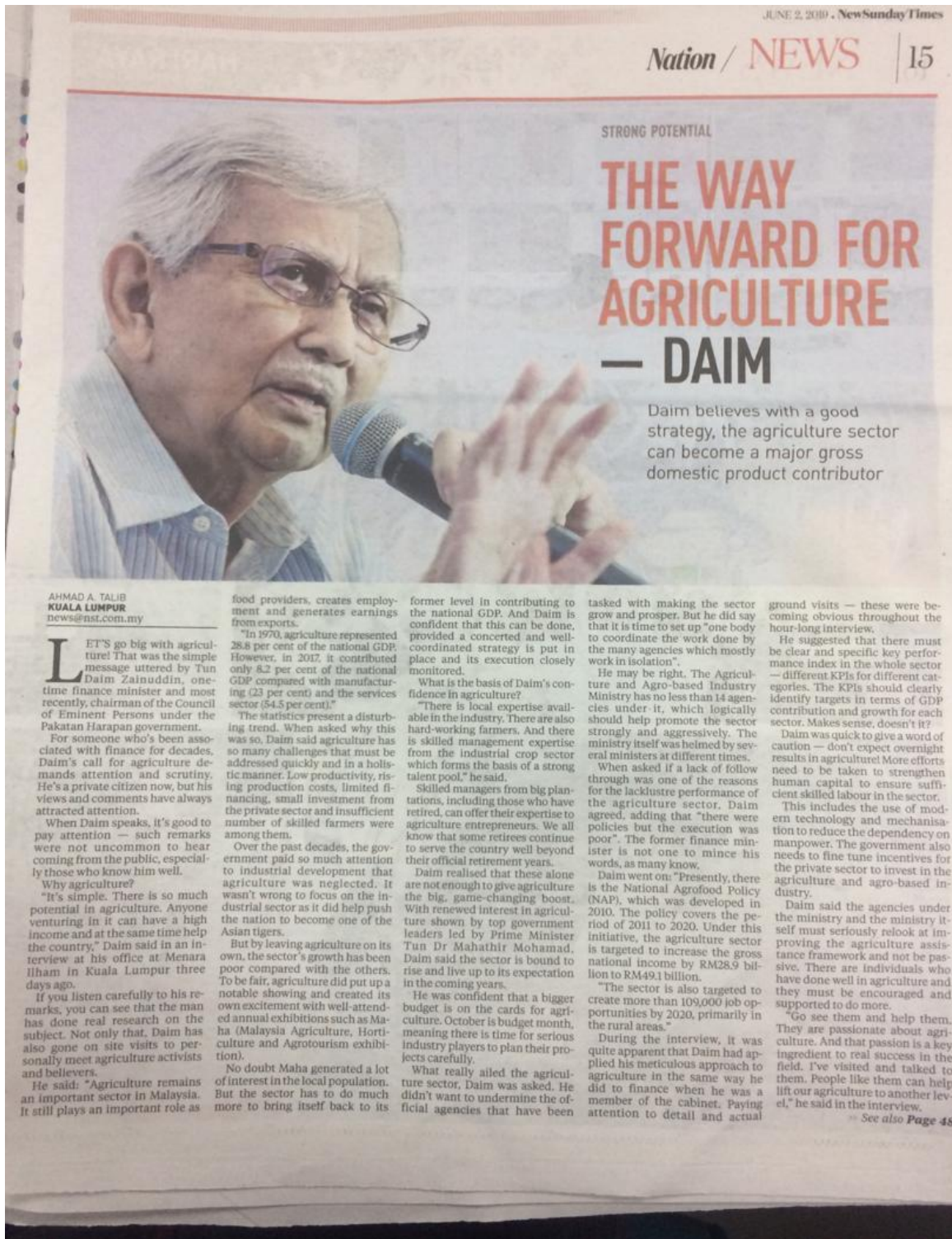
ALOR STAR: The harumanis farm-
ing industry in Kedah, presently
in its infancy, is poised to bring
the rice bowl state to a whole new
level.
While between 17 and 48 metric
tonnes of mangoes were pro-
duced last season, the figure is
expected to rise four-fold to be-
tween 70 and 75 metric tonnes
this season (May to early July).
Since the start of the season,
Kedah has recorded sales of 2.5
metric tonnes of harumanis,
amounting to RM16,000, with the
figure possible touching the
RM500,000 mark at the end of
the season.
Kedah Federal Agricultural
Marketing Authority (Fama)
deputy director (operations) Has-
rol Nizam Muhammad Zuki said
what started out as a small-scale
initiative by the farmers had
since yielded handsome returns.

Pointing to the fact that this is
only the second harvest, he said
the yield had been encouraging.
"It takes about three years for a
harumanis tree to bear its first
fruits.
"We can say that we are only in
the initial stages, and the focus is
mainly on the Kubang Pasu dis-
trict, namely Kodiang and Kam-
pong Pida 3. This is because the
climate and terrain are suitable
for harumanis.
"Also, farmers are beginning to
see that this mango variant is
able to generate good returns — a
mature tree can generate an in-
come of about RM5,000 to
RM10,000 per season — promp-
ting more to venture into the busi-
ness," he told the *New Sunday
Times* recently.
Hasrol said the initial doubts
on the quality of the harumanis
grown in Kedah vanished after
some time.
He said this proved that the
mangoes produced in the state
were similar to those of Perlis in

terms of taste, aroma, quality and
texture.
"The originality of harumanis
is there as the saplings are
sourced directly from Perlis."
"With proper care of harumanis
trees, we can ensure the fruits are
of premium quality, as demand-
ed by customers."
Hasrol said for now, Fama had
46 harumanis farmers registered
with it, operating on a 42.1ha site
with a total of 3,742 trees.
Altogether, there are more than
90 farmers involved in the plant-
ing of harumanis in the state.
Hasrol said in Fama's part, be-
sides encouraging farmers to go
into the business, it also provided
online marketing courses for
them.
It has contract farming ar-
rangements with the farmers,
which see Fama helping the
farmers to market and sell their
produce.
"With the experience and ex-
pertise, harumanis can be grown
in just about anywhere. Yan and
Langkawi have also reported
farmers venturing into haruma-
nis," Hasrol said, adding that
Fama was committed to helping
farmers to ensure the success of
the industry.
He said while there were plans
to export Kedah's harumanis
overseas, it depended on the
abundance of produce, potential-
ly in two to three years' time as
the trees mature.
He said Fama had organised
programmes to encourage people
to consume harumanis during
the fasting month.
"From the actual fruit to juices
and puddings, there are many
things one can do with the mango.
"And the response has been
overwhelming.
"We expect the demand for
harumanis to soar after the fast-
ing month."

TARIKH : 2 JUN 2019

PERKARA : PERTANIAN



STRONG POTENTIAL

THE WAY FORWARD FOR AGRICULTURE — DAIM

Daim believes with a good strategy, the agriculture sector can become a major gross domestic product contributor

AHMAD A. TALIB
KUALA LUMPUR
news@nst.com.my

LET'S go big with agriculture! That was the simple message uttered by Tun Daim Zainuddin, one-time finance minister and most recently, chairman of the Council of Eminent Persons under the Pakatan Harapan government. For someone who's been associated with finance for decades, Daim's call for agriculture demands attention and scrutiny. He's a private citizen now, but his views and comments have always attracted attention.

When Daim speaks, it's good to pay attention — such remarks coming from the public, especially those who know him well.

Why agriculture? "It's simple. There is so much potential in agriculture. Anyone venturing in it can have a high income and at the same time help the country," Daim said in an interview at his office at Menara Itham in Kuala Lumpur three days ago.

If you listen carefully to his remarks, you can see that the man has done real research on the subject. Not only that, Daim has also gone on site visits to personally meet agriculture activists and believers.

He said: "Agriculture remains an important sector in Malaysia. It still plays an important role as

food providers, creates employment and generates earnings from exports.

"In 1970, agriculture represented 28.8 per cent of the national GDP. However, in 2017, it contributed only 8.2 per cent of the national GDP compared with manufacturing (23 per cent) and the services sector (54.5 per cent)."

The statistics present a disturbing trend. When asked why this was so, Daim said agriculture has so many challenges that must be addressed quickly and in a holistic manner. Low productivity, rising production costs, limited financing, small investment from the private sector and insufficient number of skilled farmers were among them.

Over the past decades, the government paid so much attention to industrial development that agriculture was neglected. It wasn't wrong to focus on the industrial sector as it did help push the nation to become one of the Asian tigers.

But by leaving agriculture on its own, the sector's growth has been poor compared with the others. To be fair, agriculture did put up a notable showing and created its own excitement with well-attended annual exhibitions such as Maha (Malaysia Agriculture, Horticulture and Agrotourism exhibition).

No doubt Maha generated a lot of interest in the local population. But the sector has to do much more to bring itself back to its

former level in contributing to the national GDP. And Daim is confident that this can be done.

provided a concerted and well-coordinated strategy is put in place and its execution closely monitored.

What is the basis of Daim's confidence in agriculture?

"There is local expertise available in the industry. There are also hard-working farmers. And there is skilled management expertise from the industrial crop sector which forms the basis of a strong talent pool," he said.

Skilled managers from big plantations, including those who have retired, can offer their expertise to agriculture entrepreneurs. We all know that some retirees continue to serve the country well beyond their official retirement years.

Daim realised that these alone are not enough to give agriculture the big, game-changing boost. With renewed interest in agriculture shown by top government leaders led by Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Daim said the sector is bound to rise and live up to its expectation in the coming years.

He was confident that a bigger budget is on the cards for agriculture. October is budget month, meaning there is time for serious industry players to plan their projects carefully.

What really ailed the agriculture sector, Daim was asked. He didn't want to undermine the official agencies that have been

tasked with making the sector grow and prosper. But he did say that it is time to set up "one body to coordinate the work done by the many agencies which mostly work in isolation".

He may be right. The Agriculture and Agro-based Industry Ministry has no less than 14 agencies under it, which logically should help promote the sector strongly and aggressively. The ministry itself was helmed by several ministers at different times.

When asked if a lack of follow through was one of the reasons for the lacklustre performance of the agriculture sector, Daim agreed, adding that "there were policies but the execution was poor". The former finance minister is not one to mince his words, as many know.

Daim went on: "Presently, there is the National Agrofood Policy (NAP), which was developed in 2010. The policy covers the period of 2011 to 2020. Under this initiative, the agriculture sector is targeted to increase the gross national income by RM28.9 billion to RM49.1 billion.

"The sector is also targeted to create more than 109,000 job opportunities by 2020, primarily in the rural areas."

During the interview, it was quite apparent that Daim had applied his meticulous approach to agriculture in the same way he did to finance when he was a member of the cabinet. Paying attention to detail and actual

ground visits — these were becoming obvious throughout the hour-long interview.

He suggested that there must be clear and specific key performance index in the whole sector — different KPIs for different categories. The KPIs should clearly identify targets in terms of GDP contribution and growth for each sector. Makes sense, doesn't it?

Daim was quick to give a word of caution — don't expect overnight results in agriculture! More efforts need to be taken to strengthen human capital to ensure sufficient skilled labour in the sector.

This includes the use of modern technology and mechanisation to reduce the dependency on manpower. The government also needs to fine tune incentives for the private sector to invest in the agriculture and agro-based industry.

Daim said the agencies under the ministry and the ministry itself must seriously relook at improving the agriculture assistance framework and not be passive. There are individuals who have done well in agriculture and they must be encouraged and supported to do more.

"Go see them and help them. They are passionate about agriculture. And that passion is a key ingredient to real success in the field. I've visited and talked to them. People like them can help lift our agriculture to another level," he said in the interview.

See also Page 48

PAHIT MANIS



AHMAD A TALIB

NEW VENTURE

AGRICULTURE — DAIM'S NEW LOVE!

He believes the sector has enormous potential

In all my years as a journalist, I never had an opportunity to interview Tun Daim Zainuddin exclusively. Never had that one on one with the man widely regarded as one of the country's movers and shakers.

Daim as finance minister was not much of a talker (at interviews that is). But he would entertain questions at scheduled press conferences. He would choose and pick his occasions, including conferences and seminars.

But when Daim speaks, people listen. That's for sure.

I'm sure many people can easily recall the interview he gave to a Chinese newspaper two general elections ago. In that interview, Daim predicted that the Barisan Nasional would lose five states in the national polls. And he was proven correct!

But as luck would have it, I was presented with the opportunity for a one on one with him last week. I've covered Daim as a journalist before. He never failed to present himself as a serious person devoted to his own business, and later when he joined the government, as a financial guardian, planner and executioner of national fiscal and economic policies.

In the last one year or so, Daim has been in the news. That was when he was appointed as the chairman of the Council of Eminent Persons, an entity that was formed to help the newly-installed Pakatan Harapan government with socio-economic and financial matters.

Daim had said many times that he preferred to lead life as a private citizen. He was finance minister from 1984 to 1991, after which he left government service. It was then said that he had a fallout with the then prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

His critics had a field day then. To show that the fallout (if indeed there was one) was merely empty talk, Dr Mahathir brought Daim back into the cabinet in 1998 as

minister of special Functions, which the latter accepted.

Don't forget that 1997/98 was a difficult period for the country, with the financial crisis threatening to ruin us, politically and economically.

The naysayers had predicted that Malaysia would suffer and that its economy could not stand such pressure.

On the contrary, the country did very well actually, despite the financial crisis causing an overhang over the nation.

As minister with special functions, Daim set up the National Economic Action Council (NEAC), which tracked the economy daily.

Daim's approach was simple — identify the issues quickly and take immediate remedial actions.

You can say that the NEAC was a template, which was tried, tested and proven to be useful. Perhaps, it was a precursor to the Council of Eminent Persons, which Daim also chaired.

If you really had wanted to remain a private person, why came back to serve the government, I asked. His reply:

"The prime minister called me to help him. How can I refuse?" A straight-forward simple answer that speaks volumes of the former MP for Merbok's relationship with his former boss.

I had heard stories about Daim's latest love, which prompted me to seek the interview. I had seen a few postings on social media of Daim's visit to several places in the country, and none were related to finance or industrial.

They were visits to agricultural projects, run, managed and owned by individuals. Daim and agriculture?

He said: "Why not? If you take the trouble to go round the country, you will feel excited about agriculture. I've met new individuals who believe strongly in their efforts, who are passionate about their projects.

"I met a man by the name of Zu, who plants pineapple in Changlun in Kedah. Pineapple in Kedah? Most people think of Johor when pineapple is mentioned.



Tun Daim Zainuddin (left) sharing his views and thoughts on agriculture — a goldmine waiting to be fully developed.

"I met another person by the name of Marzuki who operates a small but very successful fig farm just outside Kuala Lumpur. In Kajang to be exact.

"And then, there's a Dr Yusof whose orchid farm in Dengkil is doing very well. These are the individuals who are making a name for themselves in the agriculture sector. I've also visited farms outside the country, too."

I'll be writing about these individuals, considering they had managed to trigger such big interest from Daim. Would you be helping the government in pushing for agriculture expansion then, I asked.

He said agriculture has such a big potential. It would be terribly wrong if we don't give agriculture a big push.

Thailand has made such big strides in agriculture, as has Vietnam, he said.

The people who are tasked with developing agriculture need all the support they can get. But they

must also be proactive in their research, especially in new technologies that can change our agricultural landscape.

"Do you know somewhere in the world, some farmers are experimenting with growing padi in the sea? I'm serious. If we want to reduce our over-dependence on imported foodstuff, we must be more aggressive with our agriculture," he said. By the way, our imported food bill is in excess of RM42 billion a year!

So if you have land to spare, I suggest you clear the bushes and start farming. Start with simple cash crops. Plant chillies, tomatoes, lemon grass, bananas and maybe rear chickens. Get a couple of goats since you are at it. Let's get started, folks!

ahmadt5@gmail.com
Twitter: @atpahitmanis

The writer is a former NST group editor. His first column appeared on Aug 27, 1995, as 'Kurang Manis'

Selamat Hari Raya

In a few days' time, Ramadan will leave us, to be replaced by Syawal. Hari Raya Pusa is just round the corner. This festive season will be no different from previous ones. But spare a

thought for those who are no longer with us. Selamat Hari Raya Aidilfitri, everyone, maaf zahir batin. I promise to be a better person next year. I wish all the best to all of you, too.