

Search for new territories: PM

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KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. — Present day industrialists should emulate the pioneering spirit of their forefathers. They should strive and search for new territories and not just carry out what others are doing, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said.

The country should also search for its own identity — a Malaysian identity that is not found in other countries and which will attract tourists to the country.

An example would be the Malaysian pewter which reflects the characteristics and identity of this country. This identity has attracted the people, especially tourists from abroad.

Opening the 100 Years of Malaysian Pewter exhibition, the Prime Minister said

it was also important that building designs reflect the country's identity.

He welcomed the increasing number of buildings which portrayed the country's identity and hoped the trend would continue.

He also called for the setting up of more local fast food joints selling Malaysian food like satay, nasi lemak, laksa and nasi goreng instead of the burgers sold by foreign franchises of fast food.

"Fast food attracts tourists of limited budget," he said.

With proper planning and other favourable factors including cleanliness and good service, there should be no reason why the Malaysian fast food industry should not receive good response.

To attract more tourists, more basic amenities should be provided for both local and foreign tourists.

"Many places in our country have their own unique beauty, but because of the lack of basic amenities,

this has acted as a deterrent for tourists from visiting these places. This factor is responsible for distinguishing the well-known tourist spots from those that have yet to be developed."

Dr Mahathir also urged the brass industry, especially those involved in handicraft manufacture to play a bigger role in the country's economy especially in tourism promotion.

"The brass industry has the potential to become a strong and attractive source for promoting tourism. What is needed is for improvements to be made in its designs as the current designs fulfils the local aspirations

only in engagement and marriage ceremonies.

"It is, however, unfortunate that the designs do not attract the foreign tourists. Brass ware manufacturers should, therefore, work closely with the institutes of higher learning such as the Mara Institute of Technology, to obtain their advice on designs and new technology.

He said that although the pewter industry has been closely associated as a handicraft of Malaysian culture and as souvenirs for tourists, the downstream processing of tin was still not encouraging.

The tin industry, although

one of the oldest in Malaysia, processes less than four per cent of tin output. The Government will encourage the use more raw materials locally.

An example, is the introduction of a rebate for the use of tin ore two years ago. A rebate of \$700 per tonne was given to tin ore that had been processed. It was to encourage greater processing of the tin metal into finished products like pewter.

This rebate represents 2.5 per cent of the current tin price, at \$29,150 per tonne.

However, cheaper raw material is only one of the factors which will contribute to the success of the country's manufacturers.