

It saves foreign exchange, helps preserve PM: Recycle waste

NST 13 NOV 1992

By K.P. Waran

KUALA LANGAT, Thurs. — The operations of a mammoth waste paper recycling complex here are set to save the country \$165 million in foreign exchange yearly as the plant will meet the country's need for industrial grade brown paper, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said the nation would also save \$6 million annually in waste disposal costs as 300,000 tonnes of waste paper would be recycled by the plant.

Launching the first and second phase of Genting Sanyen (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd, a multigrade paper mill complex here, he said Malaysia's import of paper and related products rose three-fold from \$516 million in 1963 to \$1,566 million last year.

He said Malaysia now imported all its paper requirements and paper goods as it did not have an integrated paper-based industry.

The imports included printing and writing paper valued at \$371 million, newsprint worth \$316 million while inputs for corrugated medium, linear board and kraft linear amounted to \$247 million.

Dr Mahathir urged the private sector to increase the recycling of waste paper on a commercial basis in line with Malaysia's commitment towards preservation of the environment.

He said this would also reduce the need for more rubbish dumps.

He cited four factors which influenced the increasing use of paper in the country — urbanisation, increase in the rate of readership, increase in household income and population increase.

He said the increase in paper use resulted in more paper wastage and this in turn provided opportunities for economic activities related to recycling.

Dr Mahathir called for consolidated efforts to increase efficiency in waste paper collection in view of the operations of the recycling plant and added that it would be a loss if paper was merely thrown away.

The first phase of Genting Sanyen, comprising six paper mills, costs \$400 million while the whole complex when completed is expected to be valued at \$1 billion.

Dr Mahathir praised the Genting Group's diversification from resort and hotel development to paper milling and added that this reflected the company's sensitivity towards the country's long-term need for various types of paper and the vast opportunities available in the sector, especially in recycling.

He said the country's per capita use of paper was estimated at 28kg compared with the world average of 38kg while in countries like the United States and Japan, the figure was between 100kg and 150kg.

He said it was evident the

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the environment
paper

Bright potential. for expansion

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industry had a bright potential for expansion in the country.

Dr Mahathir said, however, the shortage of waste paper supply in the next five years might affect the progress of local waste paper recycling and lead to dependence on imported waste paper.

As such, I call for upgrading the efficiency of waste paper collection and recycling," he added.

He said there were now 250 companies involved in collection of waste paper and hoped the smaller firms would combine to form larger companies to increase efficiency and productivity.

Genting Sanyen chairman Tan Sri Lim Goh Tong said since society was becoming more ecologically

aware, emphasis had been placed on the design and structure of the complex to ensure minimum disturbance to the environment.

He said 70 per cent of Malaysia's paper requirement were met by imports and Genting Sanyen's entry into the local paper manufacturing industry would help make Malaysia less dependent on imports.

When completed the complex will provide employment to 8,000 people and give rise to support industries.

In his speech read by Genting Sanyen director Datuk Lim Kok Thay, he said the use of recycled raw materials highlighted the Genting Group's commitment towards preservation of the environment and the conservation of natural resources.