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Mahathir

PM PROUD OF SELF-RELIANT BUMIPUTERA ENTREPRENEURS

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SHAH ALAM, May 7 (Bernama) -- The Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said he is proud to witness a new phenomenon of self-reliant bumiputera entrepreneurs who make good on their own without any government's assistance at all.

He said these bumiputera businessmen did not rely on special assistance from the government but were highly disciplined and had worked hard to succeed in their ventures by adopting healthy methods.

"The new phenomenon is increasingly evident among bumiputeras involved in finance, telecommunications, computers and manufacturing and they are really serious about wanting to succeed," he told reporters after opening the Usra Tampi (M) Sdn Bhd factory which manufactures plastic components, here.

Dr Mahathir was confident that their number would grow because bumiputeras were just as capable as the other communities if they were prepared to work hard.

He said this was unlike in the previous situation where bumiputeras were often asking for government's help to obtain licences or Approved Permits (APs) which they later sold to others to settle debts.

"This is not business and not the way that I can help," he said. --
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▼07/05/20-19MST

CNS6720

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Mahathir 2 Shah Alam

Dr Mahathir said he regularly received letters from bumiputera entrepreneurs who claimed they could not succeed without the Prime Minister's help.

"I'm willing to help but not by putting money in their pockets," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the government was prepared to minimise administrative red-tape which hampered the progress of bumiputera businessmen.

"But to give them monetary handouts just because they are bumiputeras, this I cannot do.

"If I can give money, why should I give only to one person and not the others. Its better for me to give to everyone if I could," he said.-- more

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▼07/05/20-55MST

CNS6743

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Mahathir 3 Shah Alam

The Prime Minister said he was satisfied with the performance of the country's automotive support industry but the sector could be expanded so that it did not rely solely on making components for the national cars (the Proton Saga and the second national car).

Dr Mahathir said he would like to see local entrepreneurs manufacture all the components for the Proton Saga while striving to penetrate foreign markets.

This could be achieved because they have a "comparative advantage" with low production costs and moderate wages for skilled workers.

"That is why the government wanted to maintain the low living costs in Malaysia compared to that of the developed countries because we want low costs but high wages," he said.

The Prime Minister said presently Malaysian workers enjoyed high wages because of abundant job opportunities and the industries raised wages not out of industrial action by workers.

He reminded workers that a wage increase without corresponding increase in productivity could lead to Malaysia losing her competitive edge over the developed countries which had more capital, expertise and greater market access. -- more

JO RN

▼07/05/21-29MST

CNS6760

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Mahathir 4 Shah Alam

Dr Mahathir said he had long been aware of foreign labour unions being friendly with their local counterparts to jack up costs and paralyse local industries so that they lose their competitive edge internationally.

He also commented on the Malaysian Trades Union Congress (MTUC)'s latest stance demanding that the American Federation of Labour-Congress of Industrial Organisation (AFL-CIO) to stop its petition to remove U.S' Generalised System of Preferences privileges from Malaysia.

Dr Mahathir said the MTUC's strategy was a good one if it genuinely did not want to collude with foreign labour unions out to cripple the economy.

"We hope the MTUC would really uphold this stand because this could help our workers earn higher wages. With increased investments and inadequate labour supply, wages will increase through full employment," Dr Mahathir said.

However, he said, he had not yet received the MTUC letter for a meeting to discuss its new stance.-- more

JO RN

▼07/05/22-08MST

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Mahathir 5 Shah Alam

In his speech Dr Mahathir said at the moment there were about 200 companies producing various car components and that 60 per cent of Proton Saga components were locally manufactured.

"The government is aware that a solid base for the manufacture of car parts could be a catalyst for national economic growth, bringing about spill-over effects on other industries," he said.

Dr Mahathir was confident that the car-component industry had a bright future and as such Malaysia was grooming manufacturers to cater for Proton's needs as an effort to enhance production capacity.

He suggested that local car component manufacturers expand their ventures to Asean countries through the various schemes available to find a larger market for Malaysian goods.

At the same, the Prime Minister also urged local manufacturers to penetrate markets in South countries and emerging ones in China, Vietnam, Latin America and Africa.-- more

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▼07/05/22-25MST

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Mahathir 6 (last) Shah Alam

Usra Tampi Sdn Bhd executive chairman Abdul Shukor Haji Mohamed said besides supplying 33 types of components for Proton, the company had also secured contracts to supply plastic components to firms such as JVC, Samsung, Nipondenso and Canon.

Abdul Shukor said the company would concentrate on research and development (R & D) to enhance expertise.

Usra Tampi, which began operations in 1989 with 25 workers, now has a staff of 218 and several subsidiaries. -- Bernama

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