

PM: M'sia should be known for quality products

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KUALA LUMPUR: The nation's future production strategy should ensure products have advantages in terms of technology, quality and variety, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

The strategy should not rely too heavily on available resources and the relatively low labour cost.

"We must ensure that Malaysian products will have an advantage in the international market through its ability to compete and also its quality," he said when launching the Malaysian External Trade Development Corporation (Matrade) yesterday.

Also present were International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz and Matrade chairman Tan Sri Ahmad Yahya.

The Prime Minister said such a strategy had allowed several countries in East Asia to develop their export-oriented industries.

Dr Mahathir said it was time for Malaysia to be known as a

country capable of manufacturing high quality goods.

"This needs to be done as in the next 10 years, the manufacturing sector is expected to grow at 10.5 per cent annually."

He said by the year 2000, the manufacturing sector's contribution to the nation's gross national product should be at 37.2 per cent compared to 27 per cent in 1990.

Dr Mahathir also stressed the need to enhance expertise in the service industry which he said had a high export potential.

"Although local firms did export such expertise, Matrade has been entrusted to prepare a comprehensive programme to enhance the export potential of this sector."

Dr Mahathir also urged traders to take advantage of facilities at Port Klang and make it "the region's distribution centre for South-East Asia for goods from Europe and America."