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Mahathir-ceramics

PERAK'S BIG PLANS FOR CERAMICS INDUSTRY

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TPOH, July 21 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir

Mohamad today attended a briefing on Perak's plans to become the heart of the nation's ceramics industry and how Bumiputera entrepreneurs can also participate in it in a big way.

Perak State Development Corporation (PKNP) chief executive Harun Ahmad Saruji explained to Dr Mahathir that the Ceramics Park in Chemor, 16 km north of here, was 158.3 hectares.

He said the park, where Dr Mahathir went as part of his two-day visit of Perak beginning today, would have a common facilities centre that would provide, among other things, training amenities, business and exhibition areas, advisory services and supply of gas.

The park also had 33 lots for large industries and 28 for small ones. Harun said 20 of the lots had been sold and four factories had started operations.

He also said that the project was into its second phase and the state government hoped to raise the standard of the ceramic products through the use of modern technology. -- more

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Harun said PKNP had identified several projects in the industry in which Bumiputeras could participate. He said they could mine and process clay, a major raw material of the industry, and also make ceramic products.

He said the corporation would help out Bumiputera individuals who had professional skills such as in ceramic design and decoration.

PKNP was also prepared to provide advisory and management services for implementation of projects, he added.

He also said that the state government through PKNP had forged understanding and cooperation with statutory bodies, the private sector and local and foreign institutions to ensure success of the projects.

Harun was confident that Perak could become the centre of the nation's ceramics industry, considering that the state had the necessary raw material such as ball clay and kaolin. -- more

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He said PKNP had moved into the first stage of venturing into mining and processing of clay as part of the state government's effort to assist the ceramics industry.

Such an effort was necessary, he said, because local entrepreneurs had to spend RM400 million to import 700,000 tonnes of clay for their ventures.

Harun said statistics showed the export value of ceramics products last year to be RM25 million.

Perak has 83 ceramics producers who make goods such as flower pots, jars and sanitary ware and 63 Dumiputera entrepreneurs who manufacture traditional products such as water jars and vases.

Harun said the handicraft centre in Enggor near Kuala Kangsar provided training in the making of ceramics.

Menteri Besar Tan Sri Ramli Ngah Talib, Information Minister Datuk Mohamed Rahmat and Primary Industries Minister Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik joined Dr Mahathir on the visit to the ceramics park. -- Bernama

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