

Increase our exports to Japan, urges PM

NST 22 JUL 1993

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MALAYSIA should emphasise the production of high value-added products and efforts should be enhanced to further increase the country's exports to Japan. **Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.**

Though Japan has been Malaysia's most important trading partner for more than a decade, the Prime Minister added, the trade has always been in Japan's favour.

He said this in his message for the opening session of the joint annual conference of Malaysia-Japan Economic Association and Japan-Malaysia Economic Association (**Majeca-Jameca**) in Yokohama yesterday.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysians were grateful to Japanese enterprises and the Japanese Government for being supportive of the country's industrialisation and trade policies.

"It is only through this continuous and sincere support that there will be technology transfer, thus ensuring that the percentage of Malaysian manufactured goods being imported into Japan would increase."

Citing the Proton car project, Dr Mahathir said the success of the national car project was an excellent case of technology transfer.

"I am confident that with similar support, the second national car project will also meet with appreciable success," he added.

Malaysia welcomes the

presence of Japanese enterprises as they have not only contributed towards job creation but also acted as a catalyst to attract further foreign investment to the country.

In thanking Japan for its contributions towards making Malaysia a vibrant economic entity, Dr Mahathir said Malaysia appreciated fully the training provided to local workers by Japanese firms under the Look East Policy.

The Prime Minister said Malaysians generally recognised the contribution of Japanese companies in the creation of a good industrial culture among young Malaysians.

"Young Malaysian workers are now familiar with the kind of work ethics

which can make industrialisation a success."

Dr Mahathir said the Malaysia Incorporated concept, which was adopted from Japan 10 years ago, was currently accepted and practised by the Malaysian public and private sectors.

This has resulted in a smoother and more effective implementation of national policies.

On the proposed East Asia Economic Caucus (EAEC), Dr Mahathir said he believed that consultations on issues of common concern among East Asian nations would significantly help expand co-operation in the region.

The caucus would also contribute towards the promotion of an open and free global trading system, he

added.

Thus, the Prime Minister urged **Majeca** and **Jameca** to focus on the prospects of economic relations between Malaysia and Japan, and third countries especially the United States, China, Vietnam and Cambodia.

The two-day annual joint conference, which began yesterday, was held at the **Pacifico** Yokohama Convention Centre.

Apart from Dr Mahathir's message, Japanese premier **Mr Kichi Mivazawa** also sent his message for the opening session.

International Trade and Industry Minister **Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz** also addressed the conference, followed by a dialogue with participants.