

# ***Mahathir: We are ready for maritime industry***

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SHAH ALAM: Malaysia is ready to venture into the maritime industry as local manufacturers have the expertise to produce boats, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

"We don't have to give them any incentive be-

cause they can do it on their own," the Prime Minister told reporters after visiting the Fourth Malaysia International Boat Show at the Lake Gardens here.

He also said there was increasing demand for boats, indicating that the industry was ready to flourish.

"Malaysians now have

the money to buy leisure boats, judging from the good response to the show", he said.

Dr Mahathir also said that more boat shows should be organised in view of the good sales recorded each time one was held.

"A special boat show can be held; if not here, then in Langkawi," said

the Prime Minister, who spent about two hours at the exhibition.

He said the special boat shows would be able to display larger boats, and not just leisure boats, and cater to people from all walks of life.

He also said the increase in the number of buyers showed that the

people's income had gone up.

The Prime Minister was also invited to flag off a jet-ski race.

Forty-seven companies, including from the United States, Canada and Malaysia, took part in the five-day show.

A representative from the International Maritime Association, Mike

Kelsey, said South-East Asia was a "paradise" for boating activities.

Kelsey, who is from the United States, said the maritime industry could churn out a lot of money for the country because many people were interested in boating.

Meanwhile, exhibitors reported that sales had reached RM40 million.