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Mahathir-beverage
VENTURE INTO BEVERAGE INDUSTRY, BUMI ENTREPRENEURS TOLD

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BUTTERWORTH, July 18⁰⁴ (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today called on Bumiputera entrepreneurs to take advantage of the high growth potential of the beverage industry.

He said that there were still wide opportunities for Bumiputera entrepreneurs to venture into the field and compete in the international market.

Tax incentives could be given for the production of cordials to encourage investment in the field, he said when opening the Barkath Co-Ro Manufacturing Sdn Bhd plant at the Mak Mandin industrial zone here.

He said that the growth of the beverage industry would contribute to the long-term development of the food production and food-processing industry.

Dr Mahathir said that besides the local market, there was a great demand for cordials in the international market.

Malaysia's export last year amounted to RM17 million while demand in the international market was estimated at RM11 billion, he added. -- more
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The Prime Minister said that the beverage industry was also expected to grow rapidly in future in view of the encouraging economic prospects.

Local demand for soft drinks should further improve with the popularity of fast-food outlets and the increase in the country's population, he said.

He said that to ensure that the country's products were competitive in the international market, manufacturers should upgrade the level of technology, entrepreneurship skills and quality of the workforce and the management.

On transfer of technology, he said that it was essential to upgrade productivity and further enhance long-term economic growth.

"It is hoped that with more joint ventures between local and foreign concerns, the development of technology of local industries would be accelerated," he said. -- more

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Dr Mahathir also said that the country's food-processing industry should be further developed to increase production as the country was still an importer of processed food.

He said that although the food-processing industry increased production from RM4.6 billion in 1986 to RM9.4 billion last year, about 70 per cent of raw materials had been imported.

"Although the total export rose from RM812 million in 1986 to RM2,026 million last year, the total import also rose from RM1,129 million to RM2,363 million during the same period," he said.

Tonight, Dr Mahathir was entertained to dinner by Chief Minister Dr Koh Tsu Koon. -- Bernama

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