

Other companies urged to emulate the Barkath spirit

PM praises firm's innovative attitude

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By Farush Khan

BUTTERWORTH, Mon. — Datuk Seri Dr. Mahathir Mohamad today praised the Barkath Group of Companies for their innovative and persistent attitude in expanding their business, saying that the driving spirit behind the group should be emulated by all.

The Prime Minister said other companies, especially Bumiputera-owned, should find inspiration from the effort by the Barkath Group in finding new markets and setting up joint ventures with new partners.

Kumpulan Barkath, which started off as a family sundry shop in 1945, now has grown into a group of 22 companies with diversified interests in manufacturing, import-export, distribution, property development, plantations, investment and communications.

Besides Malaysia, it has operations in Singapore, India and Britain.

Dr Mahathir today opened the Barkath Co-ro Manufacturing Sdn Bhd here, a high-tech factory which produces juice concentrates at the Acku Industrial Estate in Mak Mandin here. The factory will manufacture eight million bottles of juice concentrates a year under the

brand "Sunquick".

Dr Mahathir hoped that the increasing number of joint ventures between local and foreign firms would help intensify the local industrial technology development.

The Prime Minister said the Government would continue to provide basic infrastructure and a conducive atmosphere for more capital and technological investments in the country.

He said that wide Bumiputera participation in the modern sector such as manufacturing would continue to be given emphasis in line with the sector's increasing importance.

He said the industrial sector had grown rapidly and would continue to become the main catalyst of the economic growth, acting as the biggest contributor to the Gross Domestic Product since 1987.

He said: "The contribution of the manufacturing sector to the GDP has increased from 22 per cent in 1987 to 30 per cent in 1993."

Dr Mahathir said in the final years of the Sixth Malaysia Plan, the manufacturing sector was expected to maintain the double-digit growth rate of 12 per cent per year and its contribution to the GDP was expect-

ed to increase to 32 per cent next year.

"In the effort to achieve the status of developed industrialised nation, the responsibility and role which must be played by the manufacturing sector could not be denied," he said.

He said the Government's policy was to continue to strengthen and diversify the country's industrial base.

Based on the country's industrial master plan, food processing industry had been identified as one of the industries needed to be given priority.

Dr Mahathir, who is on a three-day visit to Penang, said the food processing industry had increased from RM4.6 billion in 1986 to RM9.4 billion in 1993.

The sub-sectors, which acted as the main contributor were producers of dairy products and animal feed, sugar refineries, drinks and flour processing.

He said, it was estimated that 70 per cent of the raw materials used in the industries were imported.

He said although the export performance of this sector was improving to reach RM812 million in 1986 to RM2.02 billion in 1993, the import had also increased from RM1.3 billion to RM2.36 billion during the same period.

"Malaysia as a whole is still a net importer of processed food. This situation must be rectified," he added.

The local demand for soft drinks is expected to expand

Big scope for fruit juice export, Dr M tells local entrepreneurs

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with the increasing popularity of fast-food outlets and the country's population increase.

He said in an effort to encourage local soft drinks industry, the Government had offered a number of tax incentives.

He said the production of

fruit juice using local fruits was encouraged and based on this scheme, it was entitled to be considered for promotion under the Investment Promotions Act 1986.

"I would like to call local entrepreneurs to study this area so that they can grab the facilities available," he said.

The Prime Minister said

apart from meeting local demand, there is also scope to export fruit juice. The country's export of fruit juice and juice concentrate in 1993 was only RM17 million while the international market for fruit juice was estimated to be RM11 billion.

Built on a two hectare site, the factory which began operations in January,

employs 20 workers. Its Sun-quick, produced in eight flavours, is for the local market and for export to Singapore and Brunei.

Also present were Penang Chief Minister Dr Koh Tsu Koon, his deputy Datuk Dr Ibrahim Saad, Barkath Coro chairman Barkath Ali Abu Backar.