

Bumiputera traders urged to be bold in making investments

GURUN, Thurs. — Bumiputera entrepreneurs should be bold in making investments if they hope to reap huge profits from their ventures.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today they should eliminate old habits of hoping for profits without having to invest.

"If there is no investment, there is no business," he said, adding that there were Malays who refused to invest but hoped to enjoy profits.

He was speaking after launching Perwaja Steel Sdn Bhd's nail-making industry, the company's first series of downstream activities.

Dr Mahathir also said the reluctance of Malays to invest would not help them expand their ventures.

Such an attitude would work in the old days where

they explored the jungle looking for wild rattan and *buah keranji* but it would not work in today's world.

Dr Mahathir stressed that Malays must invest if they want profits and that they should also be efficient to be successful in their ventures.

"Whatever profits gained from the investment should be reinvested to expand the industries," he added.

Perwaja Steel's nail-making project was a project farmed out to local entrepreneurs. Ten entrepreneurs are now undergoing two weeks' training at the rolling mill on the handling of German-made Wafios N90 nail-making machines.

Under the scheme, each participant is required to invest RM400,000 of which RM340,000 would be a loan to be serviced over 10 years at RM4,500 a month.

Dr Mahathir said he was saddened by allegations

against Perwaja Steel and its managing director, Tan Sri Eric Chia, on the issue of the cost of the machine.

He said it was Chia who came to the Government with the idea of introducing the nail manufacturing venture for the benefit of the rural folk and people should be thankful to Perwaja Steel for paving the way for the rural folk to be involved in the industry.

Dr Mahathir said Perwaja Steel offered the nail-making venture specially to the Malays and added that if it was offered to non-Bumiputeras, they would have accepted it readily.

Later, accompanied by Menteri Besar Tan Sri Osman Aroff, Perwaja Steel chairman Tan Sri Zainal Abidin Sulong and Chia, Dr Mahathir was briefed on the nail-making process.

Osman, in his speech, said a wire mesh producing

plant would be established in Kedah and added that the State Government had approved RM50 million for the project to be managed by Perwaja Wire Mesh Sdn Bhd.

He said the State Government would continue to ensure the implementation of various development projects since the State's industrial sector was encouraging.

He said more investors were keen to invest in Kedah and in the first quarter of this year the State Government had approved 18 industrial projects worth RM450 million of which 72 per cent or RM323 million were with local investments.

Zainal said the company's involvement in nail manufacturing was to protect the local nail industry and encourage the involvement of rural folk in it.