

Nation takes another step nearer ambition

GURUN, Sat. — Malaysia has taken another step towards realising its ambition of becoming an industrialised nation with an involvement in motorcycle production, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said the establishment of the motorcycle and engine production facility was one of the country's achievements in efforts to industrialise the nation.

Dr Mahathir hoped Malaysia's involvement in vehicle-manufacturing would not only be confined to producing motorcycles, cars and buses but would also involve the making of trucks and lorries.

He was speaking at the ground-breaking ceremony of the national motorcycle and engine production facility, Motosikal dan Enjin Nasional Sdn Bhd (Modenas).

Modenas is a joint venture between Diversified Resources Berhad, Kawasaki Heavy Industries Ltd and Nissho-Iwai Corporation of Japan.

Dr Mahathir said the industry would benefit the people as the demand for motorcycles was 1½ times higher than the demand for cars.

On the acceptance of the public of the first national motorcycle, Dr Mahathir said he was optimistic it would be as popular as the Proton cars.

Dr Mahathir said it also reflected the ability of the country in designing and manufacturing vehicles.

He praised DRB and its chairman, Datuk Seri Ya-

haya Ahmad, for undertaking the task to build the manufacturing plant in a very short time.

The first national motorcycle will roll out of the assembly line on Sept 15 next year, a year after today's ceremony.

In jest, Dr Mahathir said he was grateful when Yahaya informed him that DRB decided to build the facility in Gurun.

"He was not influenced by me to build the facility here," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said the project would benefit the people of Kedah not only in the form of providing job opportunities but also business opportunities.

He advised local entrepreneurs to take the opportunities seriously and they should not be hasty by hoping to make quick profits from these ventures.

"The components industry has potential here and abroad. All it needs is for entrepreneurs to work hard and be willing to learn."

Dr Mahathir said Modenas would be sending a big batch of workers to Japan for training.

"These workers will be given scholarships to learn in Japan and I hope they will learn diligently."

Dr Mahathir also hoped that they would continue to work with Modenas when they returned. "They should not be ungrateful by hopping to other jobs when a better offer comes because the country will lose if this becomes a trend."

Dr Mahathir thanked Ka-

Ltd president Dr Hiroshi Ohba for supporting the Modenas project.

"Kawasaki has expressed willingness to transfer the most advanced technology in the world to the plant here," he said, adding that he was impressed with the Kawasaki's assembly line in Japan.

Dr Mahathir said the Kawasaki assembly line in Japan could produce various models of motorcycle using the same assembly line.

Later, when asked by reporters to elaborate on his call to local entrepreneurs not to be hasty by hoping to make quick profits from their venture in Modenas' component-making industry, Dr Mahathir said he was worried that some Buniputera entrepreneurs would sell off their ventures.

"I am very worried because when we give them the opportunity to do business and when they see the opportunity of making quick profits and some people make them an offer, they will sell off."

"It takes time to make money. Some of them are impatient and do not wait until their ventures bring profits. When they sell off their businesses and they end up with nothing, they complain that we don't give them business opportunities. There is no business that gives instant profit. We are not selling groundnuts."

"I advise them to be patient and work hard. In time they will succeed and they will make money. If they sell off they will never get another chance."