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MANUFACTURING CONTRIBUTES 33 PCT TO GDP IN 1995, SAYS RAFIDAH

KUALA LUMPUR, March 18 (Bernama) -- The manufacturing sector contributed 33.1 percent of Malaysia's gross domestic product in 1995, International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz said.

That represented a 1.5 percent increase from 31.6 percent in 1994, she said when launching the Industry Excellence Award 1996 at her ministry today.

She said the total sales value of manufacturing products in 1995 was RM159.189 billion, representing a 22.6 percent increase over RM129.799 billion in 1994.

"Performance of the industry is due not only to government policies, but more due to the awareness of the industry itself, as to what contributes to their competitive edge," she said.

Rafidah also announced that Malaysia is to host, for the first time, the International Convention On Quality Control Circles. The Convention is to be held from Oct 28 to 30, 1996 at the Putra World Trade Centre in Kuala Lumpur.

She said the participating countries come from the Asia Pacific Region in the field of productivity and quality. "This is also an indication of the government's commitment and statement to quality and excellence."

On the Industry Excellence Award, Rafidah said this year's emphasis was not only to propagate the understanding of the requirement for performance excellence but the need also to share information on the successful business or performance strategies.

"Winners will be persuaded to oblige to share their quality journey with the business community at large through organised seminars," she said adding that the impact on quality and excellence dissemination would be to a wider circle especially the small and medium-scale industry's community which was the current concern of the government for development.

The four types of Award are retained as in the previous years. They are Product Excellence Award, Export Excellence Award, Services Export Excellence Award and Quality Management Award.

Under the Product Excellence Award, there will be a Special Award For Innovative Products.

There will also be a Special Award to encourage manufacturers to reduce the import content in the manufacturing of the products.

"This is in response to the suggestion made by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and the concern to reduce the balance of trade in Malaysia's favour," Rafidah said.

She also said application forms were now obtainable at the ministry's offices at Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh, Pulau Pinang, Kota Bharu, Johore Bharu, Kuching and Kota Kinabalu, and also at National Productivity Centre (NPC) offices in Pulau Pinang, Johore Bharu, Kuantan, Kuching and Kota Kinabalu.

The closing date for application is June 18, 1996.

Rafidah also today launched the NPC's book on Malaysia TQM Casebook. The book contains experiences of the eight past winners of the Industry Excellence Award and the Prime Minister's Quality Award (Private Sector Category). -- BERNAMA

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