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Mahathir-Industry

MASTER TECHNOLOGY FOR COUNTRY'S INDUSTRIALISATION, SAYSPM

GURUN, Oct 3 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad wants Malaysians to continue to acquire knowledge in the industrial field to spur the country's industrialisation process.

Such knowledge would enable Malaysia to become an industrialised nation and change its image as an agricultural country.

"We need only have a bit of confidence to achieve this aspiration," he said when opening the Motosikal dan Enjin Nasional Sdn Bhd (Modenas) factory and launching the national motorcycle, "Kriss", produced by Modenas, here.

Dr Mahathir said Modenas's success should motivate the country to venture into new fields including the manufacture of electrical household appliances.

He said although in the beginning many were doubtful of the country's ability to produce its own motorcycle despite its success in producing the national car, Modenas' success today was proof that Malaysians could do whatever they wanted.

He praised Modenas for its joint venture with Kawasaki Heavy Industries and Nissho Iwai Corporation of Japan as it involved the transfer of technology which benefitted the country.

He said the joint venture, which included Khazanah Nasional Bhd, was better than that for the production of the national car because the Malaysian partners were given an opportunity to virtually implement the whole project including the design of the factory and the motorcycle.

Modenas had proven that it was capable of the task and this showed that Malaysia was no less capable than the developed countries, he said.

He said that where previously people felt that only the West had the capability and engineering expertise, Japan and Korea had proven that they too had the skills.

Now it was Malaysia's turn to show others that it too was capable of producing products previously considered an impossibility, he said.

The prime minister, however, reminded the people that Malaysia's success in the industrial field and the prosperity it enjoyed now were the result of the peace in the country and the good relationship among the communities.

He said that like other projects, the Modenas project reflected the government's aspiration to distribute the wealth and share the success with all the races.

For example, he said, the establishment of Modenas had increased the number of bumiputera motorcycle distributors from only one per cent previously to nine per cent now.

The industry also gave the people of all races a chance to take up business, especially in the vendor system to supply components to the Modenas factory, besides creating job opportunities.

Dr Mahathir said the government would ensure that the country's wealth was fairly distributed so it would continue to be peaceful, the people would live comfortably and the country would in turn develop more rapidly.

"When the country gets more developed and achieves the Vision 2020 objectives, the people can be on par with the other races in the world," he said.

Modenas is a joint venture among DRB-HICOM which holds 55 per cent equity, Khazanah Nasional (15 per cent), Kawasaki Heavy Industries (19 per

cent) and Nissho Iwai Corporation (11 per cent).

The factory, sprawled over 28.4ha in the Gurun industrial estate, involves an investment of over RM300 million.

In the first year of production it will roll out 100,000 units of Kriss 110cc four-stroke motorcycles in two models, one with electrical starter and the other with kick start.

Production will be increased to 200,000 units in the second year and 350,000 units in the third year.

Dr Mahathir told a press conference later that the government had yet to approve the selling price of the Kriss.

However, it is believed that the national motorcycle will be priced competitively at below RM4,000 each.

Dr Mahathir also said that Modenas was producing the 110cc model because this model was widely used by the middle-income group.

"Maybe later, Modenas will produce motorcycles with higher capacities but for now we are concentrating on a model affordable to the people," he said.

He advised the people, especially the youth, not to use the Kriss for racing.

"If they want to race, we plan to have a racing circuit and they can race there and win prizes," he said. -- BERNAMA

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