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4,962 Bumiputera businessmen to be groomed further

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MALACCA, Sat. - The State Development Corporation has identified 4,962 businessmen in Malacca who can be groomed into middle-class Bumiputera entrepreneurs.

Its general manager Mahadi Arshad said of the number, 2,386 entrepreneurs were presently operating in Melaka Tengah, 1,452 in Alor Gajah and the remaining in Jasin.

He said their names, addresses and nature of business would be submitted to the Entrepreneur Development Ministry next week who would make an assessment of their business capabilities.

From the assessment, the Ministry would then decide whether they could be classified as middle-class Bumiputera entrepreneurs.

Mahadi said the corporation had completed compiling the names of successful businessmen in Malacca and would proceed to identify more of such people in stages.

"The study was carried out on the request of the ministry. We have so far identified 4,962 businessmen and will continue to list down the names of other corporate figures so that necessary assistance can be accorded to them, either by the State Government or the ministry.

"The assistance rendered will help them to further expand their venture," he said.

Mahadi said the study was part of the ministry's ongoing programme to encourage active participation of Bumiputeras in business and towards the creation of middle-class Bumiputera entrepreneurs.

"Some of them are operating motorcycle workshops, night markets, mini markets and there are also those who run their own hotels and chalets. With the names and addresses, it will be easier for the ministry or the Government to keep tabs on the actual number of Bumiputera businessmen in the country and their achievements."

Mahadi said the Government's multi-pronged approach and various business development programmes that had been introduced to increase the number of Bumiputera businessmen would enable the groups to diversify further and remain competitive in their venture.

He said the corporation would also assist Bumiputera businessmen by providing infrastructure and places for them to enhance their business potential.

"The door is always open for them to rent and to make use of our skills development centre. The centre also provides various types of training for businessmen like food processing, hotel catering and others."

Mahadi said the groups needed to be exposed on business management aspects before their business could be expanded.

Early this year, Entrepreneur Development Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed had said middle-class Bumiputera entrepreneurs must be given more opportunities to participate in professional and skilled courses, expand franchise businesses and increase the number of investors with outlays of more than RM100,000.

The move follows a call by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for an increase in the number of such entrepreneurs.

Among the sectors that would be given priority was the franchise business, he had said.

Mustapa had said the ministry had also come up with a monitoring system to keep tabs on the progress of the businessmen.

"It was important for such a monitoring system to be established to enable the ministry to continue supporting entrepreneurs and to keep the failure rates among the group to a minimum."

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