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Adopting PNB model to raise number of middle-class Bumis

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KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - The Entrepreneur Development Ministry will adopt a programme from Permodalan Nasional Berhad to help increase the number of middle class bumiputera.

Its Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed said the ministry had given PNB the job to implement the programme in companies which the government has interest in.

"The programme, based on PNB's model will include the expansion of vendor and franchise programmes, helping F-class contractors to raise their standards and developing them to be consultants," Mustapa told reporters after his weekly post-cabinet meeting.

"The main reason for implementing this programme is to ensure the continued and adequate bumiputera participation and to further develop them as professionals," he said.

Today's move is a follow up to the call made by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad last March for efforts in increasing the middle class Bumiputera population.

Dr Mahathir said that although the Government was successful in providing job opportunities for lower income bracket Bumiputeras and developing corporate leaders, this was not the case for the middle class.

Mustapa also said that Mara had decided to give a new image to its arcades and bazaars throughout the country in a joint venture with the private sector.

"This has to be done with the help of the private sector as the allocation for the upgrading of these bazaars and arcades will cost a lot of money."

He added that some of these structures had been there for 25 to 30 years, and no longer suited the local development.

Mustapa added that Mara will hold a promotion to boost business at these new places.

"The ministry expects to upgrade one bazaar or arcade in every state in stages, as the cost of upgrading will be high if we were to give a new-look to all 4,000 of such places.

"The total cost of upgrading the bazaars and arcades is estimated at RM500,000," he added.

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