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Mahathir-Goods

IT'S TIME MALAYSIA PRODUCES ITS OWN GOODS, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

KUANTAN, March 17 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said it is time that Malaysians have greater faith in their ability to produce their own goods since Malaysian goods are of the same quality as imported goods.

He said Malaysian goods, marketed under foreign brands, have gained recognition of foreign consumers.

"They certainly will buy our goods if they are of quality and reasonably priced," he said when opening Malaysia Electric Corporation Berhad (MEC) factory and MEC City costing RM4,000 million at Gambang, near here.

Dr Mahathir said that until now electrical goods used in the country are imported or marketed under foreign brands which are made or assembled in Malaysia.

Malaysians are still reluctant to accept Made-in-Malaysia electrical and electronic goods because they believe "we don't have the ability to produce such quality goods when the fact is that many of the foreign brands are made in Malaysia by Malaysian companies on contract basis," he said.

He said many of the companies owned by Malaysians have also taken over foreign companies and continued to produce the goods sold under the foreign brands.

"These goods are accepted by Malaysians because they believe the goods are not designed and produced by Malaysian companies. We also have this belief that if we use Malaysian brand, foreigners will not buy it," he said.

Dr Mahathir said if Malaysia wants to penetrate the world market it has no choice but to go on a big way since going small might not have the economies of scale, sufficient supply, money for research and development (R&D), ability to produce in large quantities and marketing network all over the world.

As such, he said operators in Malaysia must go into manufacturing of sophisticated goods where there are greater possibilities of success.

Dr Mahathir said MEC is one venture which was planned on a large scale and the proposal to have the 1,200-hectare MEC City shows the scale of the industry in consistent with Malaysia's objective to go global.

He said every business has its risks but "if we don't try we will never succeed and on the other hand if we try and we face problems, efforts can be taken to rehabilitate it."

Dr Mahathir said that so as not to be left behind, MEC must have a large R&D division with sufficient allocation.

Electrical goods are easily out-of-date and no longer appealing to consumers, thus requiring constant upgrading and innovation based on reactions of consumers, he said.

"Quality is one aspect which must be given serious attention. The same goes for scientific and technological development in electricity and electronics which can probably be used in these goods.

"The money spent on R&D is not a waste. R&D is important if a business activity is to be sustained and competitiveness safeguarded. R&D cost should be made a normal cost for all business activities. A substantial part of the budget must be allocated for R&D," he said.

In conjunction with the ceremony, Dr Mahathir planted a "Flame of the Forest" tree, near the main entrance to the MEC City.

Dr Mahahthir and Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali, also tour the factory, accompanied by MEC President and Chief Executive Officers (CEO) Datuk Seri Teong Teck Leng and Menteri Besar Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob.

The Prime Minister also received purchase order for MEC products totalling RM125 million from several companies in Malaysia.

He also presented RM30,000 to the winner of the MEC logo designing competition, Azizi Ali from Kuala Lumpur. -- BERNAMA

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