

18/09/1997

Manufacturers urged to use local ports

THE Government has urged local manufacturers to use ports and airports in the country to export their products to reduce the outflow of foreign exchange, Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said.

"Local ports are efficient enough for manufacturers to use," he told reporters after attending the weekly Cabinet meeting in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Dr Ling said there is no reason for manufacturers to use other ports since charges of the local ports are still the lowest compared with foreign ones.

Although the local ports are reporting increased or even record cargo handling and ship calls, these are still unsatisfactory, Dr Ling said.

At present 45 per cent of Port Klang's cargo-handling activities is transshipment through Singapore. In the case of Penang Port, this is 90 per cent.

He said some 30 per cent of manufacturers is using foreign ports. He hopes this can be reduced by taking measures to encourage manufacturers to use local ports.

"We hope all manufacturers will cooperate because this is within the national interest," Dr Ling said.

The Government has also taken measures to lessen the imports on luxury items, especially luxury cars.

This move is not only applicable to administrators and government servants but also to individuals.

Dr Ling said it is timely for everybody to start using the national car.

He is expected to be the first Cabinet minister to use the Proton Perdana as an official car.

He also commented on his recent visit to Mongolia and Kyrgyz Republic together with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said the Government has invited Mongolian officials to visit the inland ports in Ipoh in Perak, Padang Besar in Perlis, Nilai in Negeri Sembilan and the distribution port in Port Klang as part of a feasibility study for a similar port in Mongolia.

In the Kyrgyz Republic, Dr Ling held talks with his counterpart on aviation cooperation.

An agreement on aviation cooperation between the two countries has been drawn up but has yet to be signed by both governments.

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