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Stress quality, medicine producers told

IPOH, Thurs. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said quality must be stressed in pharmaceutical product manufacturing in efforts to promote the industry locally.

To push Malaysia towards becoming a developed nation, the industry must produce quality tested and proven products, he said.

Foreign substances, he said, must not be used in the preparation of pharmaceutical products as it would result in low quality.

"When consumers buy the products, they expect quality and what is written on the label," he said when opening the Safire Pharmaceuticals (M) Sdn Bhd factory at the Pharmaceutical Park in Bandar Seri Iskandar, 50km from here. "If they do not get what they expect, they will not be satisfied".

Dr Mahathir said the industry must strive towards achieving the ISO quality standards to compete in the international market.

Commending Perak for providing facilities to manufacture and market traditional medicine alongside Western medicine, he said it was well known that traditional medicine was effective and could cure maladies.

"Before the introduction of Western medicine, we usually turned to traditional medicine for our ailments," he said.

Dr Mahathir said it was disappointing that traditional remedies had not been tested for quality and effectiveness. Urging that an analysis be made on these medicines to ensure their effectiveness, he proposed that "blind tests" be conducted on several people with samples of traditional medicine.

"These people should not be informed of the kind of medicine administered to them," he said. "This way, we can compare results and analyse the medicine's effectiveness and learn about its composition."

Dr Mahathir said if Malaysia wanted to promote the pharmaceutical industry, it must be done properly.

He hoped the pharmaceutical industry could be expanded to include local herbal medicine.

At a Press conference later, Dr Mahathir said although traditional medicine was accepted in the country, there was still no standard to verify its effectiveness as a cure.

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