

Spend to treat waste, firms told

By HAH FOONG LIAN

PORT DICKSON: Industries should include the treatment of hazardous waste as an overhead expenditure in the production of goods, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

Citing this as a prerequisite to becoming an industrialised nation, he said manufacturers should be willing to spend money to treat their industrial waste.

He said when opening the RM318mil Kualiti Alam's Integrated Scheduled Waste Management Centre at Bukit Nanas that the response of industrialists in sending their waste to the treatment plant was slow although it was compulsory.

Only 757 out of 3,000 factories had registered with the treatment plant to send their waste there, he said.

Dr Mahathir said manufacturers should not try to make monetary gains by not sending such hazardous waste for treatment.

"Most factories prefer to store their waste in their own premises because it does not involve high expenses.

"This can, however, be dangerous and they must be willing to pay for such wastes to be treated," he added.

He said there were also irresponsible industrialists who dumped their waste

wherever they wanted.

"We know that this is not the way. A nation which wants progress must look after the safety and cleanliness of the people," he said.

On complaints over the high fees charged by Kualiti Alam, Dr Mahathir said he was confident that charges would drop if all 3,000 producers of hazardous waste used the treatment plant.

"At that stage, the cost will go down. But now factories

refuse to send their waste," he said.

He added that the fees charged at the centre for treating industrial waste were high as it required high technology.

Kualiti Alam began operating in stages with its first collection in October 1996.

As at the end of last month, it had collected more than 62,700 tonnes of scheduled waste from all over the country.