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Al Fayed expects local products to sell well at Harrods

Fauziah Ismail in London

LONDON, Thurs: Harrods Ltd of London expects STG5 million in sales within six months of the introduction of products by three Malaysian companies at its Knightbridge and other retail outlets worldwide.

Its chairman Mohamed Al Fayed said he was impressed with the companies' quality and innovative products which he saw on display at an exhibition during his trip to Malaysia in February.

"There is a lot of potential (for the Malaysian products)... the merchandise can compete with almost any product in the world," he told Malaysian journalists here yesterday.

Earlier, he signed an agreement with representatives of the three companies, namely Amtek International Corp, Malaysian Electric Corp (MEC) and Langkawii Crystaal Sdn Bhd, for the supply and distribution of their products at Harrods outlets.

The signing ceremony was witnessed by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad who is here to attend the second Asia-Europe Meeting (Asem-2) which begins tomorrow.

Asked if he would consider other Malaysian products for distribution by Harrods outlets worldwide, Al Fayed said: "Absolutely."

He described Dr Mahathir's vision for the development and promotion of Malaysian products as "tremendous".

"I have been to many countries and Malaysia is an exception... (because of) Dr Mahathir's vision."

The Prime Minister, who later toured the permanent exhibition of the Malaysian products themed "From Tradition to Innovation" at the Modern Furniture Gallery of Harrods Knightbridge here, said he hoped the products would be accepted by the famed retail chain's esteemed customers.

"We once produced only rubber and tin but we realised that these commodities did not create enough job opportunities for our people," he told a gathering of Harrods officials and top Malaysian corporate leaders.

"We decided to industrialise and produce consumer goods, but still we insisted that these products maintain the traditional Malaysian style and values," he added.

Dr Mahathir said the signing of the agreement reflects the close relations established between Harrods and the Malaysian companies, adding that he hoped other companies would take the opportunity to put on display and sell their products through Harrods.

Under the agreement, Amtek will supply garments and rubberwood furniture to be sold by Harrods Knightbridge.

It will also manufacture and source products under a licensing agreement for Harrods Boutiques worldwide, and supply food items for the Harrods Food Hall.

MEC offers its wide range of made-in-Malaysia electrical products and Langkawii Crystaal its crystal and glass products.

The permanent exhibition also features Royal Selangor's wide range of pewter tableware and decorative items, and sterling silver masterpieces.

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