

24/07/1998

PM: Compulsory use of local ports only if necessary

Kamarul Yunus

THE Government will only formulate legislation to compel Malaysian exporters and importers to use local ports, particularly Port Klang, if there is a need to do so, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

"Only if necessary ... but at the moment, we have not yet started the process," he told newsmen in Kuala Lumpur yesterday after a dialogue with chief executive officers (CEOs) of local trading companies.

The dialogue was organised by Malaysia External Trade Development Corp (Matrade).

Dr Mahathir was asked whether the Government will formulate legislation to compel Malaysian exporters and importers to use local ports.

In recent weeks, Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik had said that the Government may consider making it mandatory for companies dealing with exports to ship their goods through Port Klang.

Dr Mahathir said participants at the dialogue welcomed the Government's call for them to use local ports but acknowledged that this would take time for them to adjust from their normal practices.

"They welcome the use of Port Klang. However, it will take a little time as it means having to shift from the practice they are so used to," he added.

During his closed-door dialogue with them, Dr Mahathir said he explained to the CEOs on measures taken by the Government to promote greater use of local ports and the benefits to be derived, especially in maximising trade with the country.

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