

04/01/1998

Large-scale publicity needed for local goods

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - Manufacturers should embark on a large-scale publicity campaign to inform Malaysians of goods which can substitute foreign products.

They must also ensure that these alternatives are readily available at affordable prices, to encourage households to buy Made-in-Malaysia products.

Such a move can reduce an expected increase in living costs and curb inflation due to the depreciating value of the ringgit which has made imported items more expensive.

Housewife Zainon Mohamad Isa, 40, of Taman Cheras Jaya in Balakong, said many people were unfamiliar with truly Malaysian-made items as "some so-called local items contain minimal local content or are just assembled here".

"Shops should prepare a list of brandnames of local products to enable consumers to differentiate between local and imported products."

She said Malaysian-made products remained unknown due to a lack of promotional efforts.

"I am here to see for myself and identify some of the locally-manufactured products which can be used for daily needs," she said.

Zainon, her husband, Mohd Nadjib Abdul Rahman, and their children Mohamad Abbas, six, and Mohamad Danial, one, were visiting the "Love Malaysia, Buy Malaysia" products campaign and exhibition at the Malaysia International Design Export Centre in Sungai Besi, today.

It was opened by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Thursday.

The centre is located at Level Two of the Malaysia International Exhibition and Showroom.

There are about 50 companies promoting Malaysian-made products such as furniture, electrical appliances, building materials and traditional batik at the centre.

From now until March 31, the companies will be allowed to use the exhibition space for free and they only need to contribute 10 per cent of their sales to the centre.

Shoppers at the Mines Shopping Fair can gain access to the exhibition hall through Levels Two and Four.

Jamilah Haton Mat Salleh, 59, a distributor for traditional herbal medication, said her products were made from a concoction of herbs and roots obtained from the country's forests.

"There is absolutely nothing from abroad ... The herbs used are found in our jungles and they are packaged at our factory in Kuala Perlis by villagers.

"This is the reason why our products are affordable. In fact, more people especially those in the northern States have now become familiar with our products."

Al Wahida Marketing Sdn Bhd is distributing about 48 types of traditional medication.

It has established outlets in Jalan Chow Kit and Kajang to serve its clients besides appointing distributors in all States to promote the local medication.

"We have now ventured into Sabah and Sarawak and our next move will be to set up in Brunei.

"By the year 2000, we hope to produce a total of 400 types of medication using locally-cultivated herbs," Jamilah added.

(END)