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Mahathir-Local

DR MAHATHIR PLANS TO MEET IMPORTERS AND EXPORTERS

KUALA LUMPUR, July 10 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today he plans to meet local importers and exporters to ask them to help revive the national economy.

He said he would propose that one way to help the economy was to increase the country's exports.

"If we can export more goods, we can have more foreign exchange," he said when launching the Love Malaysia '98 Exposition at The Mines in Sungai Besi, here.

He said he would also propose that Malaysia's exports be quoted in the currency of the country concerned in view of the rise in the value of the US dollar against the ringgit.

The prime minister also suggested the use of local ports, especially Port Klang, Malaysian insurance and reinsurance companies, Malaysian-owned ships and local transportation facilities to stem the outflow of funds.

He said Port Klang's charges were one of the lowest in the world and exporters would benefit from using local ports.

"Each time you (exporters) do this, you will enrich the country. If we manage our economy well, we can be rich again," he said, adding that all these depended on the business community.

Dr Mahathir also said that the "Buy Malaysian" campaign was not an attempt to boycott foreign goods.

When people buy local, they kept the ringgit in the country and the money was circulated within, he said.

He said 70 per cent of the import and export trade of Malaysia was conducted in US dollars and the scenario must change to help revive the economy.

While saying that Malaysia was facing high inflation, he called on Malaysians to overcome the problems by having more faith in local products and supporting them.

He cited the national car, Proton, as an example, saying that the car had achieved worldwide acclaim by winning many awards overseas.

"This goes to show that Malaysia can produce world-class quality products," he said, adding that Malaysians should support local products.

The prime minister also said that at one time, Japanese goods were said to be of inferior quality but today they had emerged as producers of top quality products.

He added that Malaysia too could attain that level by exporting more top quality products.

"We must believe in ourselves, and we have demonstrated that we can produce products of superior quality," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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