

12 AUG 1998

Ling-Ports

DR MAHATHIR TO CHAIR MEETING ON THE USE OF LOCAL PORTS

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 12 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will chair a cabinet committee meeting on the use of local ports to make them, particularly Port Klang, successful load centres.

Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said today the meeting would involve representatives from the International Trade and Industry Ministry, chambers of commerce, freight forwarders, hauliers, importers, exporters and other players in the transport industry.

The date of the meeting would be announced later, he told reporters at his office, here.

Dr Ling said the government, at its weekly cabinet meeting, felt that it was not just the responsibility of the ministry and the respective ports to help the country get out of the economic crisis.

It had now become a national effort to make local ports load centres and he called on those involved in the transport chain to play a role and give their fullest cooperation towards making the move a success.

"We must turn local ports into load centres in view of the current recession where we need to save the ringgit from flowing out. This is why we are promoting local products and now we are urging players in this sector to use local ports with the same objective," he said.

He said what was most important was that this effort should be seen as an urgent matter because the shipping pattern was changing throughout the world.

Shipping companies and ships were getting bigger and would skip small ports and only go where there was a lot of cargo, he said.

Dr Ling said that if Port Klang could be turned into a load centre, all main line vessels would call there.

"This will be good business and the country will benefit and there will be a whole new growth area in term of ship bunkering, repairing and building," he added.

-- BERNAMA

ARA JK