

21/11/1998

Furniture design centre seeks RM5 million for operations

THE Malaysian Furniture Design Centre, with the help of Primary Industries Minister Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik, has asked the Government for a RM5 million grant.

Lim said yesterday the grant would help the centre operate for two years.

"Now, MFDC does not even have proper equipment to run its business," he added.

Lim was speaking at a Press conference after Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had opened the centre at Menara PGRM in Cheras, Kuala Lumpur.

The centre is the brainchild of Lim, who proposed the idea in 1996.

The RM2 million centre is supported by the Malaysian Timber Council and was set up in collaboration with the Malaysian Furniture Industry Council.

It will be managed by Semangat Kurnia Sdn Bhd, which will soon change its name to Malaysian Furniture Design Centre Sdn Bhd. Semangat Kurnia is a venture between MTC and MFIC.

According to MTC statistics, Malaysia is one of the world's leading furniture exporters with exports amounting to about RM3 billion in 1997, up from RM30 million in 1987.

"Furniture exports for this year is expected to reach RM4 billion. The figure is estimated to increase to RM7 billion by 2005," Lim said.

In the past, he said, potential foreign buyers came here once a year to view Malaysian-made furniture at the Malaysian International Furniture Fair, but they could now come throughout the year. With a display area of 2,700 square metres, the centre will house the largest collection of Malaysian export furniture on a permanent basis.

The MFCD will serve as a permanent one-stop centre for the promotion of Malaysian furniture to local and foreign buyers.

"Now, manufacturers can exhibit their furniture free-of-charge. However, in the future, they will have to pay a fee to use the centre," he added.

(END)