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Dr M: Call to buy Malaysian is not economic nationalism

Ramlan Said

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - Repeating his call to Malaysians to buy more locally-made goods, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said consuming local products was not a sign of economic nationalism.

The Prime Minister said Malaysians had to buy local products because imported goods had become more expensive as a result of the decline in the value of the ringgit.

He said Malaysians had the capacity to produce literally thousands of goods which were of world standard.

If all Malaysians were to respond to the call, he said, the national economy would recover faster.

Dr Mahathir said: "Local goods have not increased in price very much although there must be some increase due to imported contents.

"We will not in any way feel we are not getting the best when we buy Malaysian goods."

The Prime Minister was speaking at the launching of a Love Malaysia, Buy Malaysia Products campaign at the Malaysia International Design Export Centre, the Mines Resort City in Sungei Besi.

The campaign, initiated by Country Heights Holdings Bhd, will run for three months where exhibitors get to display their goods at the 200,000 sq ft exhibition space for free.

It will only display items which are locally produced and manufactured using local resources, skills and technology.

The campaign provides an opportunity for local manufacturers to exhibit and sell their products to the public.

Among those present were Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohamad Ali, Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik and the managing director of Country Heights Group of Companies, Tan Sri Lee Kim Yew.

Dr Mahathir said the Government had formulated a plan to overcome the economic problems but its success hinged on the co-operation of all Malaysians.

"If everyone co-operates fully, we can overcome all the difficulties that have come upon us today."

In fact, the Prime Minister said the co-operation required of Malaysians was quite simple, of which one was to buy and use locally-made goods.

Touching on the current economic problems faced by the country, Dr Mahathir said it was not the work of Malaysians.

"We were progressing well until last July when suddenly, through the action of non-Malaysians, our currency has been devalued, making us poorer and giving us lots of problems like a reduction in our purchasing power and the increase in prices of certain imported goods."

Dr Mahathir also congratulated Country Heights for its effort to promote Malaysian-made products through the Love Malaysia, Buy Malaysian Products campaign.

Besides getting Malaysians to buy such goods, he said efforts should also be made to export them.

"We should export as much as possible to earn the foreign exchange."

Dr Mahathir called on exhibitors to make use of the exhibition centre, where he was informed even the electricity cost would be borne by Country Heights.

"I am sure exhibitors will not lose anything by displaying their goods here. All Malaysian exporters and intending exporters should use this

facility.

"For small companies not familiar with export procedures, they can get advice at the centre or ask a trading company to export the goods for them."

Expressing his hope that Malaysians would visit the centre and buy the goods offered, Dr Mahathir said:

"That way, you will help the country to recover quickly and we will all benefit when this happens."

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