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Brand (News Analysis)

CHOOSING BETWEEN THE ALPS AND ULU TIRAM MINERAL WATER

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KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 29 (Bernama) -- What's so special about the "Evian" mineral water against the "Ocean" processed from the well in Ulu Tiram, Johor?

Truely, Evian, the mineral water taken from the French Alps is reputed for its mineral salts which are good for health.

Expensive though compared to the "Ocean" many still prefer the French mineral produce.

The same reasoning may also be expected in the choice of the Armani jeans, and the suits and blouses from the Brioni selection labelled DKNY. The person has his own reasons for the choice.

As the nation has to cut down on imports to save the economy, how many Malaysians are prepared to sacrifice and buy the local jeans, suits and blouses made at Bandar Tasik Selatan or in Serdang?

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has repeatedly told consumers to avoid wasteful imports and find the alterntive in Malaysian made goods.

At this stage many government agencies as well as non-governmental organisations (NGO) have responded and echoed Dr Mahathir's reminder to the public to give preference for Malaysian made goods.

Youth organisations from Barisan Nasional component parties, like Umno Youth are already sponsoring the "eat more local food" campaign to reduce imports, with Pulau Pinang MCA Youth campaigning to encourage purchase of local items, and the Sarawak SUPP Youth, through its circulars to members is also urging people to adopt the buy local approach.

Among the NGOs, nine organisations have set up action committees called NGO Action Committee to Defend the National Economy (TINDAKAN), to help with such efforts.

"TINDAKAN also urges the government to increase food production by offering the resources and incentives to the smallholders to reduce dependency on imports, thus correcting the trade balance," MBM secretary-general Saifuddin Abdullah said.

The Malaysian Trades Union Congress (MTUC) has proposed that workers boycott imported food.

On the government sector, the Selangor government was among the early proponents of local goods by organising a week-long exposition of made-in-Malaysia goods.

The Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Ministry directly involved in the issue has set up a special committee to select local products for its aggressive sales promotion in the buy Malaysian campaign.

However the temptation to buy imported goods still persits.

As an example, many housewives prefer butter for cake making although the local margarine can be used, as Dr Mahathir had suggested.

A housewife said it was quite difficult to get her compatriots to change their taste for margarine in any recipe.

All the campaigns will not have the desired effect unless the quality of local products matched the imported ones.--BERNAMA

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