

28 AUG 2001

Azmi-Red Tape

RED TAPE STILL CAUSING DISCONTENT AMONG SMALL-SCALE BUSINESSMEN

JASIN, Aug 28 (Bernama) -- Bureaucratic red tape is still a major cause of discontent among small-time entrepreneurs who have to deal with government departments, going by the number of complaints received by the Rural Development Minister Datuk Azmi Khalid.

He said that since even the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad himself had called for minimal bureaucracy, government officers should no longer take the matter lightly.

"It is no longer suffice for officers to wait in the office for reports on project proposals by small-time businessmen. They themselves must get to the ground for a first hand look at what the projects entail," he said.

Azmi was speaking to reporters after launching a new product, "Jus Tongkat Ali Diet," a sugar-free energy-boosting drink manufactured by Perusahaan Orang Kampung (POK) in Merlimau here today.

He said proactive government officers would be a boon to the progress of small-scale enterprises.

Azmi also urged Bumiputera companies which have grown big and are well off to serve as "umbrellas" to smaller Bumiputera entities still needing guidance and coaching.

In this context the POK company deserved to be emulated for introducing herbal products locally and internationally, he said.

"By getting its raw materials from growers of herbal plants such as tongkat Ali and kacip Fatimah in the villages, the company has indirectly developed downstream industries," he said.

He advised those involved in cottage industries to seek loans from the ministry-initiated financing scheme for rural economic projects disbursed through three banks namely Bank Islam, Bank Rakyat and Bank Pertanian.

-- BERNAMA

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