

07/08/2002

Ensuring factories come to villages

Firdaus Abdullah

PETALING JAYA, Tues. - The Government is formulating a more comprehensive programme to ensure the success of the "One Village One Product" campaign, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said that among others, the Government wanted to set-up industries, by building small factories at each and every village, with active participation of residents.

"We are identifying more products, formulating and planning to have a more comprehensive programme because we realise that village folk cannot seem to think of anything (competitive business) or work accordingly.

"We are of the view that it would be better to have small factories which are run by experienced people. The village folk can work and maybe hold shares in the company if they wish to."

The Prime Minister was speaking at a Press conference after opening the 2002 Women Entrepreneurs National Convention at the Sunway Lagoon Resort Hotel here.

He said that the "One Village One Product" campaign, which was launched a few years ago, had only managed to bear results in the agricultural sector and not in industries, as envisaged by the Government.

He said one of the main reasons for the outcome was the lack of work ethics and discipline among villagers.

"There must be a workplace discipline; if there is no discipline we cannot possibly succeed," Dr Mahathir said.

He added that those who wished to enter into business and trade should not expect government assistance and hand-outs all the time.

Earlier, he repeatedly pointed out the need for entrepreneurs to be sincere, just, skilful and be equipped with the right ethics and business culture.

He told the participants that a similar "One Village One Product" had achieved tremendous success in Thailand as the people embraced the plan with full commitment.

"Some people think that this is too ambitious a project, but I'm sure we can do it if we try hard enough.

"It is very saddening to note that even the souvenirs sold in Malaysia are made in Thailand, Taiwan, China and the Philippines... at the moment we're not capable of mass producing such items," he said, adding that the Government expected women entrepreneurs to take up such challenges.

Also present were Entrepreneur Development Minister Datuk Seri Nazri Aziz and the Ministry's secretary-general Datuk Zakiah Hashim.