

28 MAR 2002

PM-VENTURES

LOCAL COMPANIES SHOULD VENTURE INTO FABRICATING STEEL & ALUMINIUM PRODUCTS

SHAH ALAM, March 28 (Bernama) -- The Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Malaysian companies should venture into fabricating steel and aluminium products in a big way.

He said this at the press conference after launching the first Malaysian built crane by Favelle Favco Cranes (M) Sdn Bhd.

When asked whether venturing into this industry would help improve the Malaysian economy, he said that Malaysia was looking for a better economic outlook this year.

On the gross domestic product (GDP) growth for this year, he said, "I still stick to the 3.0 to 3.5 percent growth."

He said the government would be having a big exhibition centre in Bahrain and the products will be displayed there.

Hopefully local manufacturers will exhibit their products and show the track record of the goods they produce for international market, he added.

Earlier in his speech, he said that the government would pledge full support for companies capable of manufacturing quality products to meet international standard.

"Even the government is willing to provide funds for research and development (R&D) if necessary," he added.

He said that by venturing into fabricating steels and aluminium products it would help the country be less dependent on exports of electronic products where the sector was hurt by the US economic slowdown.

In an effort to strengthen the economy, Dr Mahathir said that the food industries had also been identified as another area which could be geared up for export.

Therefore, he urged manufacturers to develop superior products so that they could penetrate the international market.

As Malaysia is a trading nation, he felt there was an urgent need to increase its exports.

This is because our total trade contributes to 200 percent to Malaysia's GDP, he added.

"It goes to show how important the international trade is to us," he said.

On a lighter vein, Dr Mahathir said that Malaysia had successfully moved from a country which was based on export on raw material-based products since independence to an industrialised export-based country.

Citing some developments that had taken place, he said the steel and aluminium fabricating industries had shown progress and they were also into building plants and oil rigs.

On this note, he commended Favelle Favco Cranes (M) Sdn Bhd, a subsidiary of Muhibbah Engineering (M) Bhd for launching its first Malaysian-made crane today.

"I am confident that this company would achieve success in the future," he added. -- BERNAMA

RIZ ER KTC