

PM: Crafts hold promise

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KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has advised farmers and fishermen to work in cottage industries during their free time to boost their income.

The Prime Minister said the cottage industries provided them opportunities to make more money.

"If they apply the same amount of discipline and dedication as factory workers, then they will have more income and lift themselves out of poverty," he told reporters after a briefing at the Kompleks Kraft Kuala Lumpur here yesterday.

Dr Mahathir said the Government could help the industries to mass produce, package, promote and market their products.

He said the Government hoped to create a single authority to ensure the factories and workshops were well managed.

Dr Mahathir said his visit to Kompleks Kraft was to see whether the local people could produce handicraft with the same quality of the items that he brought back from overseas recently.

He said he was amazed at the standard of the local products.

Dr Mahathir said that such products could be produced by cottage industries where there was ample manpower and the cost was lower.

Replying to a question on another subject, he said it was a "near impossible" task to check the background of all political party members.

Dr Mahathir, who is the Barisan Nasional chairman, said political parties could not conduct checks like the

Government did to civil servants.

"If you are going to join the government service, then yes; but we (Barisan component parties) have millions of members.

He said that even if checks had been made and the members were found to be clear of any criminal record, there was still no guarantee that they would remain "clean."

"We don't know if later on it turns

out they indulged in all kinds of immoral activities, like sodomy.

"How would I know? But if I find out, I will act," he said.

Dr Mahathir was also asked to comment on DAP chairman Lim Kit Siang's statement that he was not satisfied with the Anti-Corruption Agency over its investigation of alleged wrongdoing by former Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Long Sik and his son,

Hee Leong.

The ACA had cleared them of any wrongdoing following its investigations on corporate acquisitions amounting to RM1.2bil in 1997.

Dr Mahathir said that if Lim did not trust the ACA, who was he going to trust?

"For Kit Siang, everything is political. It is not a question of law, or right or wrong," he said.