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MAHATHIR-ENGINES

MASTER ENGINE-MAKING TECHNOLOGY, SAYS PM

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 23 (Bernama) -- Malaysia needs to master the technology to make engines so that cars and motorcycles produce in the country can effectively compete in the open market, says Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"We need this kind of technology so that we will not continue to be merely a consumer (of the technology), and cost will be reduced," he said in launching Motosikal Dan Enjin Nasional Sdn Bhd's (Modenas) new moped and scooters here today.

Dr Mahathir said that importing engines increase cost of the vehicles as the foreign suppliers have to add margins to earn profit.

To compete in a more liberalised market, Malaysian producers not only need to cut cost but also improve on quality because protection like stiff duties and tariff barriers that were previously accorded to domestic producers have to be brought down.

"That is why it is important for us to be able to design and manufacture our own products not only to cut cost but to prove that we have matured, have majored in the industrial field," he said.

The Prime Minister said that Modenas has the responsibility to produce small engines and he believes such an effort was already on-going.

Knowledge of machineries is important as it enabled a greater number of products to be manufactured in the country and also enabled Malaysia to truly excel in the engineering sector, he added.

Dr Mahathir said that small engines have various usage, not only for motorcycles and scooters but also for electric generators, lawnmowers, outboard motors and others.

He said that many developing countries, which obtain their independence at about the same time as Malaysia, are now envious of the country's success to produce its own cars and motorcycles.

"In actual fact, this is not something which is miraculous. What is required is only dedication and confidence that we can make it," he said.

Malaysians, he said could succeed in any endeavours as long as they are ready to learn, train, be diligent and prepared to make small sacrifices as well as to face challenges.

Later at a press conference, the Prime Minister was asked about the pace of the national anthem which would be slightly slower than the 1992 version and sound almost like the 1957 version.

Dr Mahathir said that the pace of "Negaraku" was increased slightly in 1992 as it was felt that the 1957 version was "not fast enough or not very energetic."

"But since then, some people feel that it should be rearranged to give it more impact when you hear it or when you sing it.

"It's still the same Negaraku but we have rearranged the score," he added.

Negaraku was chosen by first Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman and has been the national anthem since 1957. -- BERNAMA

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