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Muslim nations must strive for self-sufficiency

Mansor Puteh

MUSLIM countries must strive for self-sufficiency in all aspects so that we will become an economic, social, cultural and hence, political force to be reckoned with and not be held ransom by anyone with threats of economic sanctions.

When I was a boy, almost everything we used were imported from England.

Now we are able to produce them so that we do not have any need to import such goods. And in the early 1980s, the then Prime Minister, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, said Malaysia was going to produce our own national car - the Proton.

At that time the idea was considered preposterous. Why would a relatively small country such as Malaysia want to produce its own car?

Now, after more than 16 years or so, we are able to see how successful this venture is.

Unfortunately, Malaysia has not been able to enhance the image of Proton and other goods we produce so that they become household names in the Muslim world.

It is time we shift our focus to the Muslim world where the prospect of being received is better than in the West.

I would like to see such ventures be endorsed by the Organisation of Islamic Conference and be branded "OIC-endorsed product" so that these goods are given preferential treatment in all Muslim countries.

If in the 1980s we could embark on a project to produce cars, why can't the new millennium see another venture?

I propose that Muslim countries produce our own commercial airplanes, for a start.

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Cheras