

# 'Policies that encourage imports need changing'

> This might involve restructuring of taxes, says Dr M

**CYBERJAYA:** The current government policies which seem to encourage imports rather than exports need to be changed, Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

This, he said, might involve a change in the tax system.

"We are not even serving our own country, so we will need to change the policy of the government.

"It will involve the restructuring of taxes involving particular industries," he said.

He was responding to a question on whether the government would consider some tax reduction for the rail industry during a question-and-answer session at the Technomart Rail 2019 showcase.

Mahathir said although the government can change the policy on reducing taxes, it cannot force the people to buy local products.

"You can bring the horse to the water but you can't force it to drink it," he said.

Taking local cars as an example, Mahathir said Malaysians tend to look down on



Mahathir visits a booth during the Technomart Rail 2019 showcase yesterday. - BERNAMAPIX

their own achievements, and expressed hope that Malaysians would emulate the Japanese in buying their own products.

"If you prefer local products, over time the quality of the products will improve, but if you don't encourage local products and you buy imports, there is no opportunity for the product to be of an international standard."

On the defeat of Pakatan Harapan (PH) at the Rantau by-election, Mahathir said most ruling parties do not get a lot of support during by-elections

because there will be no change in the government following these polls.

"Whether the government (ruling) party wins or not, the government remains the same."

Umno deputy president Datuk Seri Mohamad Hasan, 63, retained the Rantau state seat on April 13 in the four-cornered by-election which had PH represented by Dr S. Streram, 60.

The two other candidates were independents, housewife R. Malarvizhi, 51, and former lecturer Mohd Nor Yassin, 67.

On Tun Daim Zainuddin's statement that the government is expected to deliver the promises made in the 14th general election in six months, Mahathir said: "We don't have the money."

"Money has been stolen. That's our problem. You want to do anything ... the money is not available," he said.

Daim, who is Council of Eminent Persons chairman, said on Monday he expects the people to return to supporting the government once it delivers on its promises. - Bernama