

**Malaysia Could Connect With World Markets At Trade Fairs: Experts**  
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**By Manik Mehta**

FRANKFURT, Jan 17 (Bernama) -- With its heavily export-oriented economy, Malaysia could connect well with world markets by participating in international trade fairs, experts at the ongoing Heimtextil fair of Frankfurt say.

At the world's largest trade fair for home textiles, the absence of Malaysian exhibitors, deterred perhaps by the high costs of participation, is conspicuous.

"This fair is organised in a mature economy where the cost of participating can be relatively high, but then the cost is justified when you see the benefits: you get exposure to a discerning crowd of buyers who descend on Frankfurt to order their stocks at the show," argues Reinhardt Schmidt, a German business management consultant who also provides advisory services to Asean-based companies.

A solitary Malaysian businessman from Penang, who had come with his Taiwanese business associate, told Bernama: "To say that Malaysia's textile industry is no longer viable is a self-defeating acknowledgment.

"There are other countries such as Singapore, Taiwan, Hong Kong and India whose products have moved in the value-added category."

According to Messe Frankfurt, the Heimtextil show organiser, there are seven exhibitors from Vietnam, two from Thailand, three from Singapore, five from Indonesia, and one from Cambodia, while China and India have 459 and 363 exhibitors respectively, compared to host country Germany's 338.

There are also large contingents from Bangladesh (29), Hong Kong (23), Japan (23), Pakistan (214), Taiwan (59), South Korea (30) and Turkey (184).

Michael Jaenecke, the director for brand management (technical textiles) of Messe Frankfurt, said Malaysian exhibitors should first visit the fair for a good overview.

"They (Malaysians) would be pleasantly surprised to see how easy it is to connect with world markets. They could start by setting up a small booth which is affordable for many small Asian companies.

"Such participation will open new avenues of business for them.

International fairs also sharpen a company's marketing and innovation prowess because such fairs become large selling points for sellers who meet buyers from all over the world," Jaenicke told Bernama.

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