

## **Foreign Buyers, Visitors To Take Home "Made-in-malaysia" Quality Furniture**

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KUALA LUMPUR, March 5 (Bernama) -- Foreign buyers and visitors are cashing in on the Malaysian International Furniture Fair (MIFF) 2014 to take home quality "Made-in-Malaysia" products.

India-based furniture company, Smart Home, which has been sourcing furniture from Indonesia, Sri Lanka and China, has added Malaysia to its list of imported furniture since last year.

The Malaysia-India Free Trade Agreement that was signed two years ago has helped us to export furniture to India by offering us a smoother customs procedures," Smart Home executive, Periyasamy Chandran, told Bernama on the sidelines of the furniture exhibition today.

Malaysia and India signed the Malaysia-India Comprehensive Economic Agreement on Sept 24, 2010 which covers trade in goods, trade in services, investments and movements of natural persons.

Under the agreement, which came into force on July 1, 2011, both countries will progressively reduce or eliminate tariffs on their respective industrial and agricultural products.

Smart Home aims to increase total imports of Malaysian furniture to 50 per cent this year from 30 per cent previously.

Canadian furniture retailer, Worldwide Home Furnishing Incorporated, has not missed out the MIFF since 10 years ago.

"Malaysia has a strong position in the global furniture market despite the growing competition over the past five years," said its President, Ronnie Mehta.

He said there was still room for the Malaysian market to improve, with furniture companies coming out with new designs and innovative products that would attract more buyers.

Mobec Office Furniture, a Cairo-based company, is scouting to buy new office desks at the MIFF 2014 to complement its current offerings of chairs and sofas.

"We have been importing from Malaysia since 1999. However, due to the economic uncertainties and political turmoil in Egypt, the business was affected for a while, but we are now ready to continue the business," its Marketing Manager, Mina El Tarazy, said.

While Egyptian companies produced their own furniture, their quality was incomparable to

Malaysian furniture, El Tarazy said.

The five-day MIFF 2014, which starts today, is expected to generate significant increase in sales from US\$854 million recorded at last year's fair.

The fair is held at two venues -- the Putra World Trade Centre and Matrade Exhibition and Convention Centre -- to cater for the more than 500 international and local exhibitors and about 20,000 trade visitors.

The foreign participants are expected to come from Italy, Russia, Belgium and Japan to the fair, the single largest platform for Made-In-Malaysia furniture.

Last year's fair attracted 6,054 foreign buyers from over 140 countries.

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