

# Together for common good

NST - 1 MAY 1986

**KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has asked all quarters in the country to put aside their own interests for the sake of the common weal in efforts to further develop the nation.**

The task of nation-building demanded many sacrifices, he said in a message to Cuepacs in conjunction with Labour Day tomorrow.

"A progressive, harmonious, strong and stable country has people who are inspired, diligent, disciplined and who love their country," he said.

He said that in facing challenges, all quarters in the country must step up co-operation among themselves and be united so that problems could be resolved more effectively.

"I believe workers in the country will not forget that only a progressive society and country will bring happiness to the people, including the workers themselves."

Dr Mahathir said the labour force had contributed in various forms to national de-

velopment and the Government and country appreciated its efforts in all sectors.

In connection with Labour Day, he asked workers to ponder with the Government their respective roles in developing society and country.

"To make the task more effective, we must work as a team," he added.

Labour Minister Datuk Lee Kim Sai, in his Labour Day message, said the country recognised the rights and need for safety of workers, both of which were protected by legislation.

"At the same time, the Government is responsible for protecting the interests of em-

## MINISTER URGES CUEPACS TO ATTEND TALKS: Page 5

ployers because both sides are important in national development."

Managements and workers should, therefore, enhance their efforts at co-operation and help the Government face the economic slowdown.

Industrial relations problems should, by extension, be settled through discussion and co-operation, with the realisation that both were partners in a common endeavour.

Datuk Lee, in urging employers to be fair

to workers, said: "I also wish to take this opportunity to urge employers not to take advantage of the economic situation to re-trench workers.

"They should ensure that retrenchments are avoided by reducing the number of working days and overtime and other reasonable means."

Retrenchments should only be carried out as a last resort.

On the economic slowdown, he said it was a common problem faced by most countries. Malaysia, he said, was not spared the same fate because of its open economy, which was easily influenced by market factors.

Consequently, thousands of Malaysians, both here and abroad, have been retrenched. Some firms have been forced to close "and the Government itself has had to postpone various development projects".

Datuk Lee urged all Malaysians to be patient and join forces to ensure minimal effects of the economic slowdown on the nation.

"In such an atmosphere, both workers and the managements should be more innovative in their attitudes to improve efficiency and upgrade skills to ensure that productivity will be further enhanced so that goods and services produced by Malaysia will be comparable with those produced by other countries."

The future, he said, would be difficult with unemployment rates expected to reach 10.1 per cent in 1990. The rate could be even higher, given the increase in the number of job seekers, the influx of thousands of retrenched workers from abroad and the effect of the economic slowdown.

The Government, on its part, would continue to help create jobs in the manufacturing, plantation, construction and public sectors. But job-seekers should not be choosy in accepting jobs.

Datuk Lee indicated the private sector would be given an important role in promoting moderate economic growth strategies — an important Fifth Malaysia Plan target.

National Union of Plantation Workers (NUPW) secretary-general P. P. Narayanan urged workers to strengthen their solidarity to face the challenges ahead.