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PM: Foreigners causing 'Josses' to nation

By Zainal Epi

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. — Malaysia is losing much in foreign exchange because it is increasingly employing "outsiders" in its construction industry, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today.

The Prime Minister said many of the foreign workers were earning as much as \$50 a day. "And they earn more than this when they do overtime," he added. "They send home much of their earn-

ings and this has resulted in an outflow of foreign exchange that has caused Malaysia losses," he told reporters after chairing the monthly Umno supreme council meeting here.

"Unless our own workers are prepared to change their attitude towards such jobs we will continue to bear the losses," he said.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president, said the issue was discussed at the council meeting and the members agreed that the situation warranted ur-

gent attention.

"We are not satisfied that many unemployed people are not moving to locations where jobs are plentiful.

"We are still faced with the problem of people reluctant to do certain jobs, particularly those in the construction industry," he said.

Dr Mahathir said because of the reluctance of locals to do such jobs, the tasks had to be done by foreigners.

"They will continue to come to Malaysia because jobs here are plentiful and

easily available," he said.

"If our own people are not willing to work, the country's wealth will go to foreigners. We should not feel angry if this happens," he added.

Asked if there were ways to curb the inflow of foreign labour, he said: "We have tried many ways. But we have a long coast and many entry points.

"The point is merely this: if our people are hardworking there will be no jobs available for the foreigners and they will stop coming in."