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Dr M: Full employment possible

By Sabry Sharif

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. — Malaysia is capable of achieving full employment, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said, citing increased investment in the first four months as a good indicator.

"To ensure this target is met, pickets and threats of industrial action should be discouraged.

"We now have \$17 billion in proposed investment for the first four months of this year compared with \$11 billion last year. Based on this, we are confident of reducing the unemployment rate from seven to three per cent by next year.

"We are going to get as many investors as we can and we are confident we

can have full employment."

Dr Mahathir said this in his address as he began his nationwide tour involving continuous meet-the-rakyat sessions. Tomorrow the Prime Minister visits Besut in Terengganu.

Dr Mahathir's optimism is based on the success of the Government's aggressive drive to attract foreign investment.

Speaking to a large gathering after officiating at the Taman Bukit Angkasa C2 flats in Kampung Kerinchi here, he said:

"Pickets and other threats of industrial action will not benefit workers. The move to drum up anti-capitalist sentiments also has no benefits. If there are investors, there are jobs."

Dr Mahathir reminded workers that they had to

play their role in the national campaign to woo investors.

On the Opposition's allegations that the liberal investment policies of the Government benefited only the investors, he said they and the workers also enjoyed the fruits of their investment and labour.

Peaceful

He said that apart from creating jobs, the Government also obtained revenue from the investors through taxes on their profits and on some of their perks like luxury cars imported for their official use.

He added that these investors could choose other countries to locate their industries, especially those offering lower salaries to

their workers. But they preferred Malaysia because of its peaceful, stable and with liberal investment incentives.

He urged workers and the people not to do anything which could adversely affect the current investment climate.

Dr Mahathir also criticised Malaysian Trades Union Congress leaders Zainal Rampak and Dr V. David for not making any effort to fight moves to withdraw Malaysia's GSP privileges when 130,000 jobs in the electronics sector are at stake.

He said these leaders were paid big salaries but did little for the workers' interests. "Are they working for the interests of

workers here or the American labour unions?"

He reiterated that it was the Government which had all along worked at providing jobs for Malaysians and not the MTUC or its leaders who are DAP and Semangat 46 supporters.

Dr Mahathir also touched on the progress and prosperity achieved by the country under the Barisan Nasional Government and how the people had benefited from it.

He cited Kampung Kerinchi as an example where it had transformed itself from a squatter settlement into a large residential area where the residents have substantially improved their standards of living.