

PM urges workers to be more disciplined, better organised

# Prosperity via productivity

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. — Malaysian workers will enjoy a better life when the increase in their income is unaccompanied by a corresponding effect on the cost of living. Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said workers could achieve this by improving their productivity through striving harder in their jobs, being better organised and being more disciplined.

"It would be meaningless if workers cannot buy more goods than they were able to do so before a jump in their incomes," he told workers assembled at Stadium Negara to celebrate Workers Day.

The Prime Minister said workers should strive to reach the state of being more productive, more disciplined and better organised by the year 2020 when Malaysia becomes a developed country.

He said they would enjoy a better life if this objective is achieved.

Dr Mahathir said they would, among other things, be able to live in homes equipped with accessories now affordable only to those in the middle income group, own vehicles and go on vacations during their annual leave.

workers or the unions.

"The reason for wanting to have closer relationships with unions in rapidly developing countries is not because they sympathise with the workers in those countries.

"The reason is because they want to reduce the competition in the production of goods between developing countries and their own developed countries.

"With this they are able to incite workers in certain countries to make excessive demands and disrupt production of goods through strikes and other forms of industrial action," he said.

Dr Mahathir said it was unfortunate that there were some union leaders who were lured by the approach of the foreign unions and were prepared to set aside national interests.

He said the appointment of union leaders from developing countries to head international labour federations was aimed at influencing the economic climates of certain developing countries and added that "this was not an honour".

The Prime Minister said employers also had a vital role to play to ensure industrial harmony by rewarding their workers according to

As such, he said, workers must be determined to work harder and be organised and disciplined.

"Therefore, the role of the unions must be studied to determine new directions.

"Should the unions merely resort to industrial action to force employers to increase the salaries of their members?

"Can't the unions help the workers to increase their incomes through improved productivity?

"Is it not true that industrial harmony with reduced interruptions in the production of goods or provision of services would greatly help increase productivity and contribute to economic success?" he asked.

Dr Mahathir also asked the workers whether a country with frequent industrial strikes would be able to provide workers with a better living.

Taking to task some unions in developed countries, the Prime Minister said these unions were mostly interested in having a close relationship with unions in countries that were undergoing rapid development without giving regard to the fate of the

productivity.

"The Government gives serious attention to the payment of wages in accordance with productivity.

"The spending of workers, who form the largest group in society, greatly contributes towards the country's economic growth," he said.

As an example, he said, the annual wages of Government employees alone was more than \$8 billion — \$1.6 billion for senior officers and \$6.4 million for other Government employees.

Dr Mahathir said this amount would be spent by the workers and would in turn benefit traders and businessmen.

He said Malaysians had rejected the socialist and communist systems of government and instead chose the open market democratic system in which they were able to lead much better lives than those in other countries.

"Although we are better off than many others, we want to improve the lot of the workers and that is why we decided to privatise Government companies and agencies so that workers would be able to enjoy much better benefits," he said.