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· MAHATHIR URGES MALAYSIANS WORKING ABROAD TO RETURN HOME

Mahathir-workers

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MELAKA, April 16 (Bernama) -- Malaysians working abroad should return to work in their own country because the wages here were sufficient for a good livelihood, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

In making the call, he said the cost of living in Malaysia was far lower than that in other countries.

+In terms of purchasing power, it is much better here,+ he added when opening the Hualon Corporation (M) Sdn. Bhd. textile factory in **Tangga**

~~here~~

Dr. Mahathir said the people could not demand that foreign workers be barred from working in Malaysia if they did not appreciate the regulations imposed by the government to control employment of foreign labour but instead left the country to seek employment abroad.

+It is most shameful if we sneak into other countries in search of jobs and the treatment we receive is no less than that for criminals,+ he added.  
-- more

▼16/04/13-21MST

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+As we are training workers for high-tech industries, I appeal to Malaysians working overseas to return and work here,+ he said.

He later told reporters that the government was only persuading them to return.

+Those who wish to live in foreign countries can continue to do so but in Malaysia the workers earn good pay and, furthermore, the cost of living is low,+ he said.

He cited as example Malaysians working in Japan where they were paid as much as 10 times what they earned in Malaysia but it was meaningless because a watermelon there cost \$250.

+Our pay here is low but the cost of living is also low. So why do we need to go to other countries, running here and there, get arrested... and treated like criminals,+ he said, referring to reports of the increasing number of Malaysians working in Japan being arrested for not having work permits and involvement in crimes.

As such, it was better to live and work in **Malaysia** as there were many job opportunities and those with greater capabilities could earn more, he added. -- more

▼16/04/13-26MST

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Mahathir said the number of Malaysians working abroad was +quite substantial+ in Japan and Taiwan.

In his speech, he said Malaysia faced a shortage of workers to meet demand although it was successful in attracting tremendous investments in the manufacturing industries.,

Because of this, the strategy was to concentrate on high-tech, capital-intensive industries which did not require much manpower, he added.

He said for such industries to succeed the country needed an educated workforce with high technological skills.

This meant that Malaysian workers must be prepared to be trained in the relevant skills, otherwise, the country would have to continue setting up labour-intensive industries, he added.

+To meet this need, we may have to import foreign workers,+ he said.

Dr Mahathir hoped foreign investments would continue to increase so that the objective of making Malaysia a developed country would not be jeopardised. -- more,

▼16/04/13-36MST

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The amount of investment approved for the manufacturing sector increased rapidly with foreign the figures doubling each year from \$2,060 million in 1987 to \$4,878 million (1988), \$8,653 million (1989) and nearly \$16 billion in 1991.

He said among the reasons the country was able to achieve rapid industrial development was good infrastructure, political stability and the government's flexible and consistent policies.

The Federal government supported efforts by the state government to make Melaka an industrialised state by 2005, he added.

Hualon Corporation invested \$300 million in the textile venture which began operations in November 1991.

Dr Mahathir said he was glad to note that the company would set up another factory in Nilai, Negeri Sembilan, with investments in both factories exceeding \$1,000 million.

Chief Minister, Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Tamby Chik said factory areas in the state now covered 520 hectares and another 1,700 hectares would be developed to make Melaka an industrialised state. -- more

▼16/04/14-00MST

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At the function, the company chairman Oung Yu Ming presented a cheque for \$500,000 to the Prime Minister's wife, Datin Paduka Dr Siti Hasmah for the Welfare Association of Wives of Ministers and Deputy Ministers (Bakti), and another cheque for \$50,000 to the Chief Minister's wife, Puan Sri Zabedah, Abdullah, for the Welfare Body of Wives of Elected Representatives of Melaka (Bistari).

Earlier, Dr. Mahathir visited the Petronas refinery and jetty site in Tangga Batu where he was given a briefing by Petronas Penapisan (Melaka) Sdn. Bhd. Chief Executive Officer Abdul Rahim Haji Hashim and the project director of Beareco Drilling Company P. O. Sdn. Bhd.

The \$595 million jetty, to be completed in 26 months, would be capable of receiving ships from between 2,000 to 120,000 tonne capacity to deliver crude oil for refining and to load petroleum products for export. -- more

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It is being built by a consortium made up of Hyundai Engineering and Construction Co.Ltd. of South Korea, Jurutera Konsultant (SEA) Sdn.Bhd., YM Industries Sdn.Bhd. and Ho Hup Construction Sdn. Bhd.

The refinery, costing about \$1,746 million, is being built by a consortium made up of JGC Corporation of Japan, Sime Engineering (M) Sdn. Bhd., JGC (M) Sdn.Bhd. and C.Itoh of Japan.

The Prime Minister also signed the blueprints of the jetty and refinery in conjunction with the visit.-- Bernama

▼16/04/14-00MST