

Beware of ulterior motives, PM tells workers

By Ahmad A. Talib

KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad told Malaysian workers not to be taken in by the seemingly genuine show of sympathy from trade unionists of developed countries.

The Prime Minister said that trade unionists from these nations had often tried to influence workers in developing countries to demand for their workers' rights.

What they actually wanted to do was to undermine the competitive edge of local goods so that the products from their country would do well in the international market place, Dr Mahathir said in his Workers' Day message.

Strikes by workers in developing countries in support of their demands for higher wages would help promote the competitive edge of goods from the developed nations, he said.

He said this would have a telling effect on the livelihood of workers from the developing countries. For instance, this could result in unemployment, he added.

"Let us not be taken in by the show of sympathy from the trade unionists of these countries. All they ever want is to stop the competition from us so that they can continue to live the good life," Dr Mahathir said.

He pointed out that wages could rise without threat of industrial action or strike. If continued industrial peace will lead to more investments which in turn will lead to a shortage of workers, then managements will have no choice but to offer higher wages to attract workers.

The wage increase arising out of this will not adversely affect productivity because there is no element of industrial action or confrontation between management and employees.

"This is the best way to get a wage increase. Enduring and harmonious industrial relations will be accompanied by more investments and better productivity.

"This will in turn result in more jobs, reduce unemployment and raise wages. In fact, this is already happening now," Dr Mahathir said.

He said Workers' Day was not only important to workers but the management, Government and country as well. Celebrations on this day reflects appreciation everyone has of the role workers have in society.

He said employees existed because the management existed, and the same was

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PM: All stand to lose in disputes

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true otherwise. While management cannot ignore workers' interest, workers too cannot neglect the interest of management.

It is principle must not be forgotten, he stressed.

Dr Mahathir said a Government, which was responsible for its people and the nation's well-being, needed to ensure that the interests of workers and management were balanced.

Any industrial discord will threaten the country's competitive edge, and when this happens national development will be affected. This will mean that the *rakyat*, which includes workers and employers stand to lose.

As such, the Government would not allow any dispute which has no benefit to the nation to continue, the Prime Minister said, adding that there was no element of favouritism in this. Only the *rakyat* was favoured and loved in this whole exercise.