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EMPLOYERS ARE NOT FORCED TO INCREASE WAGE, SAYS MAHATHIM

Mahathir-Wage

192

(P)

ALOR SETAR, Oct 22 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today although it was the government intention to see Malaysian workers paid well, the government was not trying to force anybody to push wages up.

+It is the government's intention to see workers in this country get well compensated for their labour. We hope wages will increase over time,+ he said at a luncheon attended by some foreign investors and the Pekan Rabu Co-operative members here.

+I am quite sure that with the shortage of labour, wages will go up on its own,+ he added.

He said although the government would be happy to see wages go up, the increase should be concurrent with the increase in productivity of the workers.

While there could be a limit to workers' output, productivity could increase through more investment in automation and efficient methods of production, he added, -- more

▼22/10/19-20MST

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Mahathir-Wage 2 Alor Setar

Mahathir said Malaysia's primary or initial objectives in luring foreign investors to the country was to create jobs for its people, and it had done that so well that the country was now facing a shortage of labour.

+Nevertheless, we hope investors would still come and invest in such a way that it will not be dependent on labour but more on automation and robots, + he added.

He said the salary scale in Malaysia was very low compared with developed countries, although it was higher than some neighbouring countries.

The government, he said, would also like to cater to the wellbeing of the workers in some ways, including through the formation of co-operatives for workers.

+If workers have their own co-operatives, probably they will be much more settled and much less prone to being agitated,+ he added. -- more

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Mahathir-Wage 3 (last) Alor Setar

He hoped investors would lend their support and encourage their workers to join the co-operatives.

+We have no ulterior motives. Our idea is that as many people as possible should be employed. . . we should reduce unemployment to the minimum, + he said.

He added, however, that attitude of the unions was different. +They are only interested in those who already have work. The government is interested in those workers who are not working. .. unemployed people,+ he said.

Dr Mahathir also said if workers in this country were working, it was because the Government, had spent millions of ringgit to promote industries in Malaysia so that more jobs could be created.

He said the recession faced by Japan now had made Malaysia +rather worried+ because Malaysia was much dependent on foreign investment. -- Bernama

▼22/10/19-55MST