

Strikes 'will only discourage investors and lead to job loss'

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. — Strikes caused by industrial disputes will not only result in work stoppages but also lead to possible loss in employment opportunities, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

The Prime Minister added that strikes would discourage investors from investing in the country, which meant that they would invest elsewhere and bring with them the employment opportunities.

He said this was one of the reasons why foreign bodies tried to create disputes among Malaysian workers. Dr Mahathir was asked why foreign trade unions took such a close interest on the welfare of our workers.

"These people would in-

stigate our workers to take action that could push up our production costs. Strikes involve costs, work is disrupted and nothing is produced, people cannot buy our goods and we cannot sell them.

"When this happens, the investors will return to their countries, thus depriving our people of work and income."

Investors flocked to this country because its production costs were lower, compared to the investors' country of origin, Dr Mahathir said. Some foreign trade unions believed that by increasing production costs in Malaysia, the investors would return to their countries, start their operations there and provide jobs for

the people.

Asked whether there was a concerted effort to sabotage the national economy Dr Mahathir said: "They do not plan to curb our economic growth, but they are trying to make sure that they are not threatened by us."

"They feel threatened if investments flow to this country, not theirs. When they lose employment opportunities, and while unemployment is high, they won't be in a position to seek higher wages."

"But they are already enjoying high wages. They want their wages to be higher so that they can have a more luxurious life. That is why we are seen as a threat to them, employment-wise."