

Government to help firms export to Asean countries

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it difficult for the companies to embark on such programmes."

Citing Terengganu as an example, he said Perwaja Steel is facing problems with the local authority there after building such homes for its workers.

A proposal was also made to amend some parts of the labour laws to allow companies to terminate the services of workers who do not perform their duties well without paying high compensation.

The proposal should also include amendments that would allow companies undergoing restructuring to keep only useful employees, although they may not be the longest-serving workers.

Dr Mahathir admitted that it has always been difficult to dismiss people in the past.

"In protecting good employees, we are also protecting the bad ones. This is a really difficult problem," he said.

On the difficulty faced by the food industries in exporting their products to

other Asean countries, especially Thailand and Indonesia, Dr Mahathir said the Government would assist them to venture into these markets.

Both Thailand and Indonesia have regulations requiring exporters to register their products with the authorities before the products can be exported to their countries.

"Even Malaysia has been struggling to export Proton cars to Indonesia and could only do so after agreeing to buy its aircraft," he said.

On a call to impose export levy on latex, he said the recommendation would be looked into.

On a suggestion to reduce the duty on golf balls, Dr Mahathir said the Government was slowly reducing the protection accorded to various industries.

"Initially the protection given was meant to help infant industries. These industries have matured over the years and no longer need such a protection."

They should be able to compete with foreign products especially since Malaysia has the raw materials and low cost of production.