

BERNAMA EDITORIAL EXTRACTS: FRIDAY, APRIL 2  
02 MAY 1997

Malaysian workers have won praise for their contributions to develop the country.

BERITA HARIAN, writing about Workers Day celebration yesterday, says they can easily accept changes for the nation and their own welfare.

It points out the success of privatisation projects are proofs of their acceptance towards changes in helping the Government to lessen its burden while at the same time increase the quality of their lives.

The good relationship between the employers and employees has resulted in peace and prosperity prevailing in the country.

The paper says although the workers at times disagreed or opposed Government policies, the problems were amicably settled without resorting to acts which could threaten national stability as would otherwise have been done by their foreign counterparts.

The daily calls on both public and private sector workers to unite without identifying themselves as Government servants and companies' staff and to concentrate their efforts and commitment in helping the Government in the efforts to turn Malaysia into a developed nation.

The paper also welcomes the campaign to encourage workers to save which will be launched by the Deputy Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim in conjunction with Workers Day.

It urges the workers to start savings while they are still in service so that when they retire they can live quite comfortably.

NEW STRAITS TIMES, touching on the role of workers, refers to the thought-provoking speech by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohammad at the National Congress on Vision 2020.

Dr Mahathir drives home the need for the whole, "from workers to top executives and the so-called tycoon", to understand the national strategy of sustaining growth of at least seven per cent to realise our dream of developed nation status by the 2020.

The importance of the workers' role cannot be over emphasised as stated by Dr. Mahathir.

"Nothing is more important than the development of human resources."

The people wants to see that the tripartite co-operation among unions, the private sector and the Government under the Malaysia Incorporated concept be translated into meaningful results giving paramount importance to the national and the people's interests.

All parties have to consistently adjust and adapt to give forth their best. There is absolutely no room for policies of expediency for short-term gains.

The daily points out productivity is the key word in this fast-moving world, particularly with globalisation and the need for Malaysia to open up its market to gain access to the rest of the world.

A productivity-linked wage system is imperative in the national strategy to remain competitive.

However, productivity has slipped, the wage reform is not moving fast enough and undesirable work habits are creeping in.

Job-hopping has become a serious problem, poor and sub-standard performance and a general lackadaisical attitude are some of the negative attributes.

Unconscionable bosses who have no qualms about staff-pinching are making the situation worse.

Bad habits among the workforce and their employers have to be discarded

fast if we are to sustain our growth.

The paper says they must not wait for an economic downturn to change their ways.

BUSINESS TIMES writing on the hike in electricity tariff announced by the Government on Wednesday, assures that it is only marginal increase.

It points out some quarters made it sound as if it was the end of the world for them.

Some warned of increasing production costs and diminishing competitiveness while others threatened to protest with a campaign to use less electricity.

And there were those who shamelessly predicted that they will have to pass the higher costs to consumers.

There is no need to be overly distressed by the higher electricity bills, no need to find outlets for dumping the anticipated extra costs.

The daily feels companies affected by the increase should already have long-term plans to deal with such increases that may affect production and costs.

Just like they should have strategies to handle fluctuations in the foreign exchange, oil prices, freight charges and other charges.

Companies are also expected to anticipate increases in salaries just as they are expected to deal with drops in productivity and efficiency.

They are not expected to call it quits everytime workers file for wage adjustments every three years or so, or when the dollar and yen move against them.

The paper points out Tenaga Nasional's new tariff rates are not only inevitable but had been expected, and the Government has made sure that the rise is marginal.

The vibrant economy demanded a better and greater electricity transmission capability from Tenaga. All this boils down to a higher operating costs.

The company needs the increase in tariff rates to compensate the higher costs to run its operations.

And it was due to this that the Government agreed to the request for higher tariff, something that the company has sought since last September.

The Government has the responsibility to ensure that utility services providers give efficient services at a competitive rates.

The daily concludes that the revised rates are a small price to pay.

Bernama

02/05/97 14-59MST

bns