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Mahathir-Workers

DR MAHATHIR PRAISES WORKERS IN MALAYSIA FOR THEIR DISCIPLINE

PETALING JAYA, Aug 8 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today praised workers in Malaysia for being more disciplined than their counterparts in other countries which have also been affected by the economic crisis.

"During the current economic slowdown, workers in Malaysia have not created any problems," he said when opening the 52nd MIC General Assembly here.

"I had a meeting with leaders of the Malaysian Trades Union Congress yesterday and I thanked the workers for appreciating the problems being faced by the government and not demanding wage increases," he said.

"I also explained to workers' leaders the many ways through which the government felt workers' income can be increased without they resorting to industrial action like in the West," he said.

"There are many ways of increasing workers' income such as by increasing the number of jobs, enhancing productivity and skills and investing in modern machinery," the Prime Minister said.

He said the total number of jobs in Malaysia had increased by two million and some of which had to be filled by foreigners.

The Prime Minister said the fall in the value of the ringgit caused by currency speculators had affected economic growth and stalled government development programmes.

For instance before the economic slowdown the government had the aim of ensuring that workers take-home-pay should be in the region of RM1,200 to RM1,400 by the year 2020.

"However we have been let down by a group of greedy people who did not wish to see Malaysia progress," he said.

The Government however was confident that one day this objective would be realised as the country had its own ways of increasing the income of its people.

What was important was for the workers not to emulate the western convention which was based on strike action.

Dr Mahathir reiterated that Malaysia would not seek IMF assistance even though the Malaysian ringgit and stock market faced pressure and one attack after another.

"We have still been successful in maintaining our position without seeking IMF help," he added.

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