

01/05/1998

Strive to help revitalise economy, Dr M tells workers

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad calls on workers to continue to work hard, be diligent, and show commitment in helping to revive the economy of the country.

In his May Day message released in Kuala Lumpur yesterday, Dr Mahathir advised workers not to give up easily and to have patience in facing the current challenges.

"We must accept that the Government has to reduce its expenditure due to the economic problems. We have to tighten our belt and assist in the economic recovery," he added.

Noting that the Government has taken various measures to counter the effects of the regional turbulence, Dr Mahathir said efforts are being made to increase economic activities.

"They include strengthening the country's financial system and providing adequate credit facility for business activities," he added.

Dr Mahathir said while the Workers' Day this year may be a little gloomy due to the economic downturn, Malaysian workers are still fortunate compared to their counterparts in many of the neighbouring countries.

"We should be thankful (for this)," he added. In fact, except for those who are choosy, there are enough jobs for everybody who wishes to work. The Prime Minister also said the Government is happy with the cooperation shown by the workers in these trying times.

"They have refrained from doing anything that may aggravate the current economic downturn. They are united, disciplined and responsible in facing the problems," he added.

Dr Mahathir also praised the unions' support, saying: "They know that the problems are caused by external forces. The foreign speculators had purposely depreciated the value of our currency and shares and as a result, our economy is experiencing a downturn."

He also said the workers should remain alert against any attempt to "colonise" the country anew.

"This time, they do not use military strength or politics to control us but economic power," he said, adding that several countries once dubbed as "emerging economies" have been weakened by such action.

As a result of the pressure exerted, many companies have had to close down and their workers laid off, he said.

(END)