# PM warns foreign workers

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## 'Indon rioters causing trouble... we cannot accept this kind of behaviour'

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ALOR STAR, Fri. — Indonesia will be the last country which Malaysia will look to when seeking foreign labour from now on as they are causing numerous problems, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said priority would be given to workers from other countries instead.

"Maybe in the future, we will accept workers from other countries workers who do not give us problems.

"They (Indonesian workers) are giving us a lot of trouble . . they try to smuggle themselves in and when they are arrested, they become violent. We cannot accept this kind of behaviour," he said.

Asked if the Government would

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take measures to reduce the number of Indonesian workers, he said: "Yes . we want to reduce, but the factories require workers and since there are not enough Malaysians theyhavetouseforeignworkers."

He was commenting on a riot by some 450 Indonesian workers of a textile factory in Nilai yesterday.

The workers attacked policemen and destroyed vehicles after 16 of their colleagues were detained by police when they tested positive for

**drugs.**

The incident comes just over a month after 1,600 illegal workers at a holding camp in Pekan Nanas, Johor, rioted and torched a section of their quarters.

Speaking to reporters at Bangunan Tunku here, Dr Mahathir said the Government could not accept such behaviour by foreigners working in Malaysia.

"We'll have to send them back . . . we cannot have this kind of behaviour on the part of guest workers.

"They're our guests and they should respect the laws of this country," he said.

Asked if the Government intended to raise the matter with the Indonesian Government, Dr Mahathir said:

"We have no plans to do it at the moment but we may have to bring it up (later)."

Earlier, in his speech at a meeting with Kubang Pasu district civil servants, Dr Mahathir said it was unfortunate how some people who came to this country to eke out a living rioted due to certain reasons.

In **Kangar,** Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the Government has decided to tighten the conditions for the recruitment of foreign workers in the wake of yesterday's incident.

He said the areas being looked into included the documentation process and the qualification and health of the workers.

"We definitely want to impose more stringent conditions when we take in foreign workers in future," he told a Press conference after presenting RM1,000 each to 64 former Home Guard police personnel.

In **Pengkalan Hulu**, Home Ministry secretary-general Datuk Seri Aseh Che Mat said the Government would review its policy to provide extensions to foreign workers on a year to year basis following the rioting.

He said the Government would also find out whether there was any basis that their long stay in the country contributed to the creation of social problems.

Meanwhile, Dr Mahathir also denied that the Government was taking advantage of the Sept 11 terrorist attacks to crack down on oppositionparties.

"People should know that action taken against the militant group was before the Sept 11 incident and was not directed against opposition parties.

"Although they (those arrested) are members of the opposition party, we only arrested people who are directly involved . . . they hold only minor posts in the parties," he said.

Human Rights Watch in its latest annual report criticised the Government for the "continued crackdown on potential political challengers and arresting key opposition leaders."