

# PM: **Compromise** and gain

KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the willingness of workers and trade unions to resolve wage problems through negotiations and compromise, has enabled Malaysia to continue to compete with other countries.

"It is this attitude that contributes to the well being of the workers and other Malaysian citizens," he said in his message in conjunction with Workers Day today.

Dr Mahathir said the method practised in Malaysia was better in all aspects and should be maintained.

He said some developed countries had become less

developed due to continuous strikes by trade unions, following misunderstandings with employers.

Dr Mahathir said Workers Day this year was being celebrated amidst improved economic conditions, with unemployment in Malaysia no longer constituting a major problem compared to other countries including in developed countries.

He said the Government would like to see all job vacancies filled by local workers, as this would reduce flow of foreign exchange to other countries.

Dr Mahathir said although a small number of workers

were unemployed, he said Malaysians generally led a comfortable life as the Government had been able to keep the country's economy under control to prevent high increase in the cost of living.

To some, he said this might not be unusual but it must be remembered that in many developing countries, inflation had risen up to 100% a year.

Human Resources Minister Datuk Dr Fong Chan Onn said Malaysia was facing stiff competition in attracting foreign investments due to factors such as globalisation and the entry of China into the World Trade Organisation.

He said the impending

Asian Free Trade Area, scheduled to come into effect early next year, had also pressured the nation's economy to undergo necessary changes to counter the challenges of the new era.

"We are now competing with other countries and to emerge as victors, we must continue to upgrade our efforts and productivity to achieve the nation's developmental vision," he said in his message to commemorate Workers Day.

MTUC president Senator Zainal Rampak said in his Workers Day message that Malaysians were observing the celebrations this year

amidst uncertainties of job security and income sustainability.

He said just like their peers from other parts of the world, Malaysian workers were falling prey to the tentacles of globalisation with employers resorting to various acts such as union-busting as well as wide implementation of the voluntary separation scheme.

He urged all workers to be united, steadfast and committed in their struggles against all unfair labour practices and social injustices.