

PM: M'sia

STAR 3.1 AUG 2002

wants to

settle issue rationally

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia wants the issue regarding repatriation of illegal migrant workers from Indonesia and the Philippines to be resolved in a rational way.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Malaysia was doing its best to defuse the situation following complaints from Indonesia over the whipping of illegal workers and the claims of mistreatment by Filipinos who were awaiting repatriation.

"I am trying to defuse this in a very rational way. If they claim that we mistreat them, let them come and see," he told reporters after chairing the Umno Supreme Council meeting yesterday.

On the burning of *Jalur Gemilang* by Indonesian and Filipino protesters in front of Malaysian embassies in both countries, Dr Mahathir said the action did not reflect the stands of their governments.

He said the burning of the flag was done by the ignorant and that such incidents were not peculiar only to the two countries as some people in Malaysia had also resorted to similar expression over certain issue in the past.