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Mahathir-Workers

VITAL FOR WORKERS TO POSSESS KNOWLEDGE, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, May 1 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that it is important for Malaysian workers to acquire knowledge to face the globalisation era and bring greater development to the country.

"Knowledge is important in a human civilisation and if it is not acquired, the country will not progress. In fact, it will be colonised by foreigners," the Prime Minister said.

He said if Malaysian workers were not knowledgeable, they would be making decisions or assessments on problems based on emotions.

"When we are knowledgeable, our decisions will be more rational and be in the interests of all parties, the government, employers and employees," he said at a Workers' Day rally for public sector workers at the National Institute of Public Administration (Intan) here.

The theme for the celebration is "Knowledgeable Workers Make for a Progressive Nation".

Dr Mahathir said Malaysians should spare no efforts to acquire knowledge, and in this world of globalisation Malaysian workers should be careful if they did not want to see the country's independence and people's dignity undermined.

"This is what we want to avoid, and all parties should understand that the government made decisions after considering their interests," he said.

He said progress would be meaningless if the people could not get to enjoy the benefits of the development.

He said workers possessed a powerful and an effective weapon as they could resort to strikes to pressure the government for their own interests.

"It is clear that the weapon given to workers is very powerful and effective but a weapon is only good if it is put to good use and not otherwise," he said.

However, he said workers in the country did not resort to strikes and were prepared to settle their problems through discussions, and this spirit of consultation was shared by employers and the government.

Dr Mahathir said workers, employers and the government should cooperate as they were dependent on each other to develop the country.

He said they should not make decisions based on emotions, out of anger, racial considerations or adopt a confrontational attitude as such methods would not be fruitful.

"In Western countries, problems are settled on the basis of might is right. But in Malaysia, we place importance on ties between the government, employers and workers," he said.

The Prime Minister said all three parties had important roles to play in developing the country and the fruits of their endeavours should be fairly distributed among themselves.

On globalisation, Dr Mahathir said that in this era certain quarters had used capital as a weapon to conquer the world, and in the process they had forced developing countries to pawn their independence.

"When capital comes in it is good, but when it leaves, the country is crippled and faces difficulties... This happened to Malaysia in 1997. We lost US\$250 billion and they thought we should not stop them. When we stopped them, they criticised us," he said.

Dr Mahathir said globalisation was one way to colonise a country by indiscriminately using its economy to reap profits.

"If they make profits, it is good for us. But if they suffer losses in

their ventures in our country, they will wind up operations and run to another country, and our workers will lose their jobs," he said.

-- BERNAMA

SR MAM YBY