

Pay workers more to boost economy, says Dr M
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Malaysia's economic expansion will be even greater if there are higher salary schemes and benefits for workers in the country so that they are able to increase their productivity, says former Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"Generally, the income for all workers is quite low currently although the managers of GLCs (government linked companies) seem to be getting high salaries," he said during a visit to the shipyard of NGV Tech in Sijangkang, Banting today.



Without higher salaries, the country will not be able to achieve high growth, Mahathir said, adding that the increase in pay however must be met with equal amount of work.

He said when the productivity of staff is raised, the company achieves higher profits, and the employer will certainly reward the workers with higher income.

Mahathir also at the same time called on workers to have a sense of loyalty to their respective companies. He cited the Japanese workers' sense of loyalty as a factor that had indirectly contributed to the economic progress of the country.

Many welders from the country for instance are being pinched by companies from the Middle East which offer salaries three to four times higher than what they are getting now from their employers in Malaysia, he said.

Malaysia will not be able to also compete at the international level citing low labour cost as there are several countries offering low labour cost together with higher productivity where one worker is able to perform the work carried out by two to three workers.

Thumping endorsement for local shipyard

On NGV Tech, he said after having seen the shipyard for himself, he was confident that the company will be able to built boats of various types.

The orders for the vessels come not only from the Middle East but from Europe as well for use at oil rigs and for sea patrol.

It will not be surprising if one day NGV Tech, which receives 90 percent of its orders for boats from foreign clients and 10 percent from local clients, gets to build larger ships, he said.

He also said that while in the past it had been difficult to get shipbuilders from South Korea to operate in Malaysia due to their lack of interest, this was changing now.

Chairman of NGV Tech, Zulkifli Shariff meanwhile in his speech said that the company was in the final stages of negotiations to buy 70 percent equity of a shipbuilding company in South Korea.

Mahathir also called on local giants like Petronas to order boats from NGV Tech.

"We make our purchases based on a foreign brand name, but we are not so convinced about our own products," Mahathir said.

NGV Tech which operates on a 24-hectare site besides Sungai Langat here currently has 2,000 workers who are working to complete 130 boats or vessels worth more than RM3 billion.

Meanwhile Mahathir will hold a Hari Raya open house at his residence at 58, Jalan Kuda Emas, The Mines Resort City, Seri Kembangan between 10am and 1pm on Saturday.

Mahathir has also extended an invitation to the event through his Facebook page.

- *Bernama*

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