

# PM: Labour reforms won't work if employees lack passion

PUTRAJAYA: Initiatives and strategies to empower the workforce will not achieve positive results if workers lack passion for the tasks they are entrusted with, says the Prime Minister.

Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad pointed out that better wages and emoluments would come along if workers perform their tasks well first.

"On our journey to being a high-income nation, we have collectively worked to identify our challenges and formulate a clear plan of action.

"However, in order to achieve this ambitious reform agenda, all parties, including private sector employ-

ers and foreign business communities, have an important stake in this process," he said in his opening address at the roundtable with the International Chambers of Commerce.

The Prime Minister said the federal administration had highlighted four priority areas during the mid-term review of the 11th Malaysia Plan, namely reforming the labour market, improving labour efficiency and productivity, enhancing access to quality education and training and fostering stronger industry-academia linkages.

"These reforms are crucial, not

only in developing human capital to support our future economic growth, but also in addressing job mismatches which contribute to graduate underemployment, unemployment, slow wage growth and over-dependence on foreign labour," he said.

Pointing out that these have serious implications on the economy and businesses, Dr Mahathir said the government will be reviewing laws to improve the labour market, ensure greater transparency, and to further safeguard worker welfare.

He said for Malaysia to remain the preferred choice for foreign

investors, there was a need to provide a conducive environment to encourage the inflow of foreign capital and technology, adding that it was also important to strengthen the competitiveness of Malaysia's industries in the global market.

At a press conference, the Prime Minister said issues raised by the International Chambers of Commerce representatives include immigration requirements and the need for workers with skills and talents to be in the country for a longer period of time.

They also raised the issue of foreigners being required to invest at least RM1mil, which was a burden

to small industries, he added.

"On our education system, they pointed out that the system must cater for the kind of work that our people will have to do when they graduate, and they welcomed the labour reforms and policy changes which the government has put in place," said the Prime Minister.

Dr Mahathir added that it was pointed out that foreign investment had shifted from mere product assembly to programming robots and machines, which means different skillsets needed, leading to the need to upskill Malaysia's human resource pool.