

MAHATHIR

1973 (P)

12

JOHORE BAHRU, JAN. 25 (BERNAMA) -- FIMA CHAIRMAN DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMED TODAY DENIED THAT HE WAS ACCOMPANIED BY POLICEMEN DURING HIS VISIT TO THE GOVERNMENT-OWNED PINEAPPLE CANNERIES OF MALAYSIA FACTORY AT PEKAN NENAS, 27 MILES FROM HERE, YESTERDAY. COMMENTING ON A NEWSPAPER REPORT, HE ALSO DENIED THAT THE WORKERS WERE PICKETING WHEN HE ARRIVED.

HE SAID: +WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED WAS THAT THE WORKERS APPROACHED ME SIMULTANEOUSLY DURING THEIR LUNCH BREAK TO VOICE THEIR INDIVIDUAL GRIEVANCES.

+THERE WAS NO QUESTION OF PICKETING AT ALL.+

AS FOR THE POLICEMEN, THOSE REPORTED TO BE ACCOMPANYING HIM MUST HAVE BEEN THE ONES ON NORMAL DUTY AT THE FACTORY PREMISES, HE SAID.

HE ADDED: +NON EVEN CAME NEAR HIM. THE NEWSPAPER REPORT GAVE THE IMPRESSION THAT I WAS SCARED OF THE WORKERS.+

+HOW COULD I BE. THERE WAS NOT EVEN A PICKET IN THE FIRST PLANCE.+ -- BERNAMA MORE 1600/ZCM

MAHATHIR 2 JOHORE BAHRU

DR. MAHATHIR SAID THAT HE ALSO MET WORKERS AT THE SECOND FACTORY IN PULAU SEBATANG.

THEY DID NOT RUSH TO VOICE THEIR GRIEVANCES AS THEY HAD BEEN INFORMED OF THE MEETING EARLIER.

+IT WOULD HAVE BEEN THE SAME AT THE FIRST FACTORY -- ONLY THERE WAS NO TIME TO ARRANGE A PROPER SESSION,+ HE SAID.

HE ADDED: +THIS WAS BECAUSE OF MY SHORT STAY THERE.+

ASKED WHETHER THE MANAGEMENT HAD MADE ANY DECISION TO FULFIL SOME OF THE WORKERS' CLAIMS, PARTICULARLY THOSE IN RELATION TO OVERTIME PAYMENTS, HE SAID:

+WE HAVE, IN FACT, AGREED TO THIS SOMETIME AGO. THE ONLY QUESTION NOW IN IMPLEMENTATION.

+WE CANNOT SAY NOW WHEN WE ARE GOING TO IMPLEMENT THIS.+ -  
BERNAMA. 1725/1D