

KUALA LUMPUR, MARCH 22 (BERNAMA) — THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE LABOUR LAWS ENSHRINES THE RIGHT OF AN INDIVIDUAL TO WORK WITHOUT REMOVING HIS RIGHT TO RESORT TO INDUSTRIAL ACTION IF HE IS WRONGED, DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY.

HE SAID THAT THE AMENDMENTS WERE ALSO AIMED AT NOT ONLY PROMOTING THE WELFARE OF THE WORKERS BUT ALSO THAT OF THE NATION.

HE STRESSED THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS NOT AGAINST LABOUR BUT TO THE CONTRARY IT WANTED TO PROTECT LABOUR WHICH FORMED A HUGE SEGMENT OF THE POPULATION.

+AS A GOVERNMENT WE ARE RESPONSIBLE NOT ONLY TO THE WAGE EARNERS BUT ALSO TO THE SELF EMPLOYED, THE UNEMPLOYED AND THE UNDER EMPLOYED AND WE HAVE TO FAIR TO ALL, + HE ADDED.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR WAS BRIEFING NEWSMEN ON THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS ACT AND THE TRADE UNIONS (AMENDMENT) ACT, 1980 WHICH WOULD BE DEBATED IN PARLIAMENT ON APRIL 3.

HE SAID THAT MALAYSIA HAD THE MOST LIBERAL ATTITUDE TOWARDS UNIONS COMPARED WITH NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES.

+EVEN WITH THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS OUR LABOUR LAWS WILL STILL BE VERY LIBERAL IN THE REGION, + HE ADDED. —BERNAMA MORE 1515/1B

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THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER SAID THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS WOULD CURTAIL POLITICIANS FROM MAKING USE OF UNIONS FOR THEIR OWN ENDS.

IT WOULD ALSO PREVENT INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNIONS FROM EXPLOITING LOCAL WORKERS FOR THEIR OWN BENEFIT.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THE LOCAL UNIONS TRY AND RALLY SUPPORT FROM OUTSIDE UNIONS TO DESTROY OUR OWN ECONOMY. +

THE RECENT DISPUTE BETWEEN MAS AND THE DEFUNCT AIRLINE EMPLOYEES UNION WAS GOOD EXAMPLE OF THIS KIND OF FOREIGN UNIONIST INTERFERENCE IN THE AFFAIRS OF THE COUNTRY.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID LOCAL UNIONISTS DO NOT PROTEST WHEN THEIR COUNTERPARTS IN THE WESTERN NATIONS PREVENTED OUR GOODS

FROM BEING IMPORTED INTO THEIR COUNTRIES.

+IN FACT IT IS THIS KIND OF PROTECTIONISM THAT OUR LOCAL UNIONISTS SHOULD FIGHT,+ HE SAID.

HE HOPED LOCAL UNIONISTS DO NOT FALL INTO THE TRAP OF UNION LEADERS IN DEVELOPED COUNTRIES FOR THEIR ONLY MOTIVE WAS TO HINDER THE DEVELOPING COUNTRIES FROM THE PROCESS OF INDUSTRIALISATION.--

MAHATHIR-LABOUR 3 KUALA LUMPUR

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR WHO IS ALSO TRADE AND INDUSTRY MINISTER, SAID THE MAIN AIM OF THE COUNTRY WAS TO REDUCE UNEMPLOYMENT TO THE +MAGIC+ FIGURE OF FOUR PER CENT.

+WHEN THIS HAPPENS INDUSTRIES WHETHER THEY LIKE IT OR NOT WILL HAVE TO RAISE THE PAY OF THEIR WORKERS.+

HE SAID THAT WITHIN THE NEXT 10 YEARS MALAYSIA WOULD BECOME A POWERFUL COUNTRY PROVIDED THE PEOPLE WERE WILLING TO WORK HARD AND HELP THE GOVERNMENT ACHIEVE ITS TARGETS.

+WE HAVE ALL THE RESOURCES NECESSARY FOR INDUSTRIALISATION LIKE OIL, POWER, SKILLED MANPOWER AND RAW MATERIALS.+

HE DISCLOSED THAT THERE WERE SOME +VERY BIG PROJECTS+ IN THE PIPELINE LIKE AN INTEGRATED STEEL MILL AND PETRO CHEMICAL PLANTS.

+IN FACT MOST OF THOSE INTERESTED IN INVESTING IN THE PROJECTS WERE LINING UP WAITING FOR US TO PICK THEM.+ -- BERNAMA MORE 1530/B

MAHATHIR-LABOUR 4 KUALA LUMPUR

LABOUR AND MANPOWER MINISTER, DATUK RICHARD HO WHO WAS ALSO PRESENT AT THE BRIEFING, DENIED UNION CLAIMS THAT THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS FORBODE UNIONS FROM TAKING INDUSTRIAL ACTION SUCH AS STRIKE.

+THIS IS A MISCONCEPTION AS WE HAVE NOT TAKEN THIS RIGHT AWAY: WHAT WE HAVE DONE IS TO ENSURE THAT STRIKE ACTION IS TAKEN IN A MORE ORDERLY WAY.

+THE OTHER REASON IS THAT WE WANT UNION MEMBERS TO KNOW WHY THEY ARE GOING ON STRIKE.

+MOST OFTEN WORKERS WERE IGNORANT WHY THEY WENT ON STRIKE AND JUST FOLLOWED THEIR LEADERS BLINDLY,+ HE SAID.

DATUK HO SAID THAT THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS WOULD ALSO ENSURE THAT POLITICIANS DID NOT EXPLOIT UNION WORKERS.

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+THE GOVERNMENT FEELS THAT POLITICIANS AND UNIONISTS CANNOT BE
BED FELLOWS.

+IT IS IN THE INTEREST OF THE TRADE UNIONS NOT TO BECOME TOOLS
OF THE POLITICIANS BECAUSE TRADE UNIONS WILL LOSE THEIR CREDIBILITY
AND IN THE END THE WORKERS WILL LOSE,+ HE SAID.

DATUK HO ALSO REFUTED CLAIMS BY THE MTUC THAT NONE OF ITS 183
AMENDMENTS WERE CONSIDERED.

HE POINTED OUT THAT THIS WAS NOT TRUE AS 107 OUT OF THE 183
AMENDMENTS PROPOSED BY THE MTUC CONCERNED THE EMPLOYMENT ORDINANCE
WHICH WOULD BE AMENDED IN JUNE. -- BERNAMA MORE 1545/SZ

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DEPUTY LABOUR AND MANPOWER MINISTER DATUK K. PATHMANABAN,
EXPLAINING THE INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS ACT, SAID THE +CORE+ OF THE
ACT, WHICH WAS AIMED TO FINDING A SPEEDY AND JUST SOLUTION TO A
DISPUTE, WAS NOT AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSED AMENDMENTS.

HE SAID THE SYSTEM OF COLLECTIVE BARGAINING, THE MINISTRY'S
CONCILIATORY ROLE IN DISPUTES AND THE DECISIONS OF THE
INDUSTRIAL COURT WOULD NOT BE AFFECTED BY THE AMENDMENTS.

-- BERNAMA 1547/SZ