

# Mahathir: **Govt** has nothing to do with **proposed MLO**

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — **Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad** said today the **Government has nothing to do with the formation of the proposed Malaysian Labour Organisation (MLO).**

However, the Prime Minister said: "If that is what the workers want, the Government has no right to stop them."

He said his criticism of the MTUC should not be misconstrued as his endorsement for an alternative umbrella body.

"What I said was that as long as the opposition controls the MTUC, the Government will consider it as part of the **opposition** as **their views are no** different from the opposition parties," he told reporters after chairing the Umno Supreme Council meeting.

Dr Mahathir said it was up to the workers to decide if they wanted to be represented **by** a political party.

He also said he had agreed to meet MTUC president Zainal Rampak after receiving a letter from him two days ago.

Asked if MTUC secretary-general Dr V. David could also attend, Dr Mahathir said: "He is a leader of the MTUC so there is no problem. I will see him."

On what he would tell Dr David, he said: "I will say that the MTUC is represented by the opposition and I will regard them as an opposition party."

"I don't see how he can represent the workers when he is engaged in activities like the withdrawal of the Generalised System of Preference."

Dr Mahathir said if the GSP privileges were withdrawn, about 70 factories **and** other organisations **would** have to close, resulting in about 80,000 people losing their jobs.

"Can anybody explain how that is compatible to working for the workers? To get them unemployed?" he asked.

Told that Dr David had said the withdrawal of the GSP would only result in lesser profits, Dr Mahathir laughed and said: "If profits are reduced, then factory owners will have to shut **down** their factories and workers will lose their jobs. I do not want to get into an argument in **the Press about** this, but I think he must be very naive to think **'like that.'**"