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MTUC

PETALING JAYA, JUNE 6 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD WILL MEET MALAYSIAN TRADES UNION CONGRESS (MTUC) LEADERS OVER LABOUR ISSUES ON JULY 5, MTUC PRESIDENT ZAINAL RAMPAK SAID TODAY.

HE HOPED THE MEETING WOULD BE THE START TO A GOOD RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN THE PRIME MINISTER AND THE LABOUR MOVEMENT.

THE MEETING WOULD BE THE FIRST OFFICIAL MEETING BETWEEN THE MTUC AND DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SINCE THE PRIME MINISTER ASSUMED OFFICE IN 1981.

SPEAKING AT A NEWS CONFERENCE AT THE MTUC HEADQUARTERS HERE, ENCIK ZAINAL SAID THE MTUC HOPED TO HAVE SIMILAR MEETINGS WITH THE PRIME MINISTER ONCE EVERY SIX MONTHS TO DISCUSS LABOUR ISSUES.

HE SAID ALL MEMBERS OF THE MTUC WORKING COMMITTEE, INCLUDING SECRETARY-GENERAL V. DAVID AND DEPUTY PRESIDENT AHMAD NOR -- TWO PROMINENT DAP FIGURES IN THE MTUC -- WOULD BE ATTENDING THE MEETING WHICH WAS CONFIRMED BY THE PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE YESTERDAY. -- MORE
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ENCIK ZAINAL SAID THE MTUC LEADERS WOULD BE ATTENDING THE MEETING WITH AN +OPEN MIND+ AND WOULD BE PUTTING FORWARD ONLY LABOUR ISSUES AT THE MEETING. +NO POLITICAL ISSUE WOULD BE DISCUSSED,+ HE ADDED.

HE ALSO SAID THE MTUC WAS PREPARED TO LISTEN AND CONSIDER THE PRIME MINISTER'S ADVICE, ADDING THAT THE CONGRESS WOULD EVEN BE WILLING TO CORRECT ITS MISTAKES.

THE MTUC WOULD ALSO BE SUBMITTING A MEMORANDUM STATING ITS VIEWS ON SEVERAL OUTSTANDING LABOUR ISSUES TO DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR, HE ADDED.

ENCIK ZAINAL, HOWEVER, DID NOT RULE OUT THE POSSIBILITY THAT THE MTUC WOULD INFORM THE PRIME MINISTER OF ITS OPPOSITION TO THE INTERNAL SECURITY ACT AND THE OFFICIAL SECRET ACT AT THE MEETING.

ACCORDING TO ENCIK ZAINAL, THE MTUC'S LAST MEETING WITH THE PRIME MINISTER WAS IN 1980 WHEN TUN HUSSEIN ONN WAS IN OFFICE. DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR, WHO WAS THEN DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, AND OTHER SENIOR CABINET MINISTERS ALSO ATTENDED THE MEETING, WHICH DISCUSSED AMENDMENTS TO THE LABOUR LAWS. -- MORE
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ENCIK ZAINAL SAID AN IMPORTANT ISSUE TO BE RAISED AT THE MEETING, WITH DETAILS STATED IN THE MEMORANDUM, WAS THE NEED FOR THE NATIONAL LABOUR ADVISORY COUNCIL (NLAC), A CONSULTATIVE TRIPARTITE BODY TO DISCUSS LABOUR ISSUES, TO BE GIVEN DECISION-MAKING POWERS.

ENCIK ZAINAL SAID THE MTUC ALSO HOPED TO CLARIFY WITH THE PRIME MINISTER THE CONTROVERSY SURROUNDING THE AMERICAN GENERALISED SYSTEM OF PREFERENCES (GSP) WHICH HAD BEEN CLOSELY LINKED TO THE CONGRESS.

THE MTUC WOULD ALSO PRESENT THE PRIME MINISTER ITS PROPOSAL FOR APPOINTMENT OF FOUR MORE INDUSTRIAL COURT CHAIRMEN AND THE SETTING UP OF ANOTHER INDUSTRIAL COURT IN PULAU PINANG.

IT STRONGLY FEELS THAT THE PRESENT OFFICE AND STAFF OF THE INDUSTRIAL COURT, WITH ONLY THREE CHAIRMEN, ARE INSUFFICIENT AND HAVE CAUSE A SERIOUS PROBLEM OF BACKLOG OF CASES.

THE MTUC WOULD ALSO POINT OUT THE NEED FOR ELECTRONICS WORKERS TO HAVE A NATIONAL UNION, CITING ALLEGED HARASSMENTS FACED BY THE RCA WORKERS UNION.

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THE MTUC, ENCIK ZAINAL SAID, WOULD ALSO CALLED FOR IMMEDIATE AMENDMENTS TO THE COMPANIES ACT ON PROVISIONS RELATING TO RECEIVERSHIP TO ENSURE THAT RETRENCHED WORKERS ARE PAID THEIR FULL BENEFITS BEFORE A COMPANY CONSIDERS OTHER COMMITMENTS.

IT WOULD ALSO CALLED ON DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR TO TAKE IMMEDIATE STEPS TO CHECK THE CURRENT PRICE INCREASE.

AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE, ENCIK ZAINAL ALSO ANNOUNCED THAT THE MTUC MIGHT HAVE 15 MORE AFFILIATES FROM EAST MALAYSIA WITHIN THE NEXT TWO MONTHS. AT PRESENT, THE CONGRESS HAS 145 AFFILIATES.

HE SAID THESE UNIONS HAD AGREED IN PRINCIPLE TO JOIN THE MTUC AND WERE ARRANGING TO HOLD THEIR RESPECTIVE SPECIAL DELEGATES CONFERENCES TO DECIDE ON THE MATTER.

THE UNIONS INCLUDE THE SARAWAK SHELL OIL FIELD SUPERVISORY AND SPECIALIST STAFF UNION= SARAWAK SHELL BERHAD EMPLOYEES UNION= PETRONAS EMPLOYEES UNION OF SARAWAK, LIMBANG DIVISION TIMBER WORKERS UNION= MALAYSIAN HELICOPTER SERVICES BHD EMPLOYEES UNION OF SARAWAK= MIRI MUNICIPAL COUNCIL EMPLOYEES UNION= POSTAL UNIFORMED STAFF UNION OF SARAWAK= UNION OF TELECOMS EMPLOYEES OF SARAWAK= SABAH PORTS AUTHORITY EMPLOYEES UNION AND CUSTOMS EMPLOYEES UNION OF SARAWAK. -- MORE

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THE OTHERS ARE THE SARAWAK MEDICAL SERVICES UNION= SARAWAK TRANSPORT COMPANY AND BAU TRANSPORT COMPANY EMPLOYEES UNION= RAJANG PORT AUTHORITY OFFICERS UNION= SARAWAK AGRICULTURE STAFF UNION AND A SEAMAN'S UNION IN SABAH CALLED KESATUAN PELAUT SABAH.

SINCE JANUARY, SIX UNIONS, INCLUDING THE RCA WORKERS UNION AND KLANG CONTAINER TERMINAL STAFF UNION, HAD JOINED THE CONGRESS. -- BERNAMA

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