

U E333 AAE
MAHATHIR - GSP

SUBANG, JUNE 4 (BERNAMA) -- THE PETITIONS PRESSING FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE GENERALISED SYSTEM OF PREFERENCES (GSP) BENEFITS FOR MALAYSIA SHOULD NOT BE VIEWED LIGHTLY, PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY.

HE SAID IT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT TO GET THE GSP BENEFITS BACK ONCE THEY WERE WITHDRAWN.

+WE MUST TAKE SERIOUS NOTICE ON THE PETITIONS,+ HE TOLD REPORTERS AT THE KUALA LUMPUR INTERNATIONAL AIRPOPRT HERE AFTER SENDING OFF PRESIDENT SUHARTO OF INDONESIA.

HE SAID THAT MALAYSIA NEEDED TO MAKE MORE EFFORTS THAN WHAT IT DID IN 1988. +WE WERE SUCCESSFUL IN 1988. WE MUST MAKE MORE EFFORTS NOW TO ENSURE THE GSP BENEFITS ARE RETAINED.+

IN 1988, THE AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOUR AND CONGRESS OF INDUSTRIALISED ORGANISATIONS (AFL-CIO) FILED A PETITION AGAINST MALAYSIA AND MALAYSIA'S STATUS WAS REVIEWED BUT EVENTUALLY THE PEITITON WAS REJECTED. -- MORE

1417MST 04 06 90

U E337 AAE
MAHATHIR - GSP 2 SUBANG

IN THE JOINT PETITION FILED BY AFL-CIO AND THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR RIGHTS RESEARCH AND EDUCATION FUND (ILRREF) ON FRIDAY, MALAYSIA IS CHARGED WITH NOT COMPLYING WITH CERTAIN INTERNATIONAL LABOUR STANDARDS.

AMONG THEM, CITED IN THE PEITITON, ARE BARRING ELECTRONIC WORKERS FROM HAVING A NATIONAL UNION, THE ABSENCE OF A BASIC MINIMUM WAGE AND OBSTACLES FOR WORKERS TO STAGE STRIKES.

SEVERAL GROUPS INCLUDING CUEPACS HAD COME FORWARD TO STATE THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO CAMPAIGN FOR THE RETENTION OF THE GSP BENEFITS.

LAST SATURDAY, WORKERS OF HARRIS ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY, AN AMERICAN-OWNED ELECTRONICS COMPANY HERE, STAGED A DEMONSTRATION PROTESTING AGAINST THE PETITION.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE GOVERNMENT WOULD EXPLAIN TO THE US GOVERNMENT THE REAL SITUATION HERE (REGARDING THOSE CHARGES). -- MORE

1427MST 04 06 90

D660

R E348 AAE
MAHATHIR - GSP 2 SUBANG (CORRECTED RPTN)

IN THE PETITIONS FILED BY AFL-CIO AND THE INTERNATIONAL LABOUR RIGHTS RESEARCH AND EDUCATION FUND (ILRREF) ON FRIDAY, MALAYSIA IS CHARGED WITH NOT COMPLYING WITH CERTAIN INTERNATIONAL LABOUR STANDARDS.

AMONG THE ALLEGED VIOLATIONS ARE BARRING ELECTRONIC WORKERS FROM HAVING A NATIONAL UNION, THE ABSENCE OF A BASIC MINIMUM WAGE AND OBSTACLES FOR WORKERS TO STAGE STRIKES.

SEVERAL GROUPS INCLUDING CUEPACS HAD COME FORWARD TO STATE THEIR SUPPORT FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO CAMPAIGN FOR THE RETENTION OF THE GSP BENEFITS.

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MAHATHIR - GSP 3 SUBANG

HE SAID THE HUMAN RESOURCES MINISTRY WOULD COORDINATE SUCH EFFORTS.

WHEN ASKED IF HE WAS CONFIDENT THAT THE GSP BENEFITS WOULD BE RETAINED, HE SAID: +I CANNOT SAY I AM CONFIDENT BECAUSE THE DECISION IS NOT WITH ME ... IT IS WITH THE US GOVERNMENT. I HAVE NO SAY WITH THE US GOVERNMENT BUT WE WILL MAKE OUR STAND KNOWN TO THEM.+

FOREIGN MINISTER DATUK ABU HASSAN OMAR SAID THE MALAYSIAN EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON HAD BEEN DIRECTED TO BE PREPARED TO PRESENT THE EXPLANATION.

THE HUMAN RESOURCES MINISTRY, TRADE AND INDUSTRY MINISTRY AND THE FOREIGN MINISTRY WOULD COORDINATE EFFORTS IN MAKING THE EXPLANATION, HE TOLD REPORTERS.

DATUK ABU HASSAN FELT THE LATEST CASE WAS NOT THAT STRONG AS THE FIRST ONE AND WAS CONFIDENT THAT THE GSP BENEFITS WOULD BE RETAINED.

THE US GOVERNMENT WILL ANNOUNCE ON JULY 15 COUNTRIES WHICH HAVE COME UNDER REVIEW FOLLOWING THIS YEAR'S PETITIONS. IF THE PETITIONS FILED BY THE AFL-CIO AND THE ILRREF ARE ACCEPTED, HEARING WILL BEGIN IN OCTOBER AND A DECISION WHETHER THE GSP WILL BE RETAINED OR NOT WILL BE KNOWN IN APRIL NEXT YEAR. -- BERNAMA

1548MST 04 06 90