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MAHATHIR-GSP
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KUALA LUMPUR, JUNE 8, (BERNAMA) -- PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TODAY RAPPED LOCAL TRADES UNIONISTS WHO ARE MORE CONCERNED WITH THE WELFARE OF AMERICAN LABOUR RATHER THAN LOOK AFTER THE INTERESTS OF MALAYSIAN WORKERS.

HE SAID MALAYSIAN TRADES UNION CONGRESS (MTUC) LEADERS HAD GONE TO THE EXTENT OF BEING ACCESSARY TO THE INTERNATIONAL BROTHERHOOD OF ELECTRICAL WORKERS IN TRYING TO DEPRIVE MALAYSIA OF BENEFITS UNDER THE U.S GENERALISED SYSTEM OF PREFERENCES.

THE LOBBYING FOR THE REMOVAL OF MALAYSIA'S GSP BENEFITS WAS PART OF A PLOY TO PROTECT AMERICAN ELECTRONICS WORKERS, THE PRIME MINISTER TOLD REPORTERS AFTER LAUNCHING THIS YEAR'S NATIONAL LEVEL TEACHERS' DAY CELEBRATIONS.

ACCORDING TO THE PRIME MINISTER, U.S LABOUR UNIONS HAD ALLEGED THAT 30,000 AMERICAN WORKERS WERE LOSING JOBS DUE TO COMPETITION FROM MALAYSIA.-- MORE

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+WHILE AMERICAN LABOUR UNIONS ARE FIGHTING FOR THEIR WORKERS, HERE WE HAVE MTUC LEADERS SUPPORTING THEIR PETITIONS FOR THE WITHDRAWAL OF THE GSP FROM MALAYSIA,+ HE SAID.

THE PETITIONS WERE MEANT TO CLOSE DOWN ELECTRONICS COMPANIES IN MALAYSIA AND HAVE THEM RELOCATED IN THE U.S., HE SAID.

+WE HAVE THE MTUC HELPING THEM. WHO ARE THEY (MTUC) ACTUALLY FIGHTING FOR?+ ASKED DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR.

HE SAID THE ISSUE ABOUT THE FORMATION OF A UNION FOR ELETRONICS WORKERS WAS JUST AN EXCUSE.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID AS FOR NOW, HE HAD NO PLANS TO HOLD TALKS WITH U.S. PRESIDENT GEORGE BUSH ON THE GSP ISSUE BUT WOULD DEFINITELY RAISE IT WITH THE LATTER IF THERE IS AN OPPORTUNITY.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID, THE GSP WAS BEING REVIEWED ANNUALLY AND EVEN IF THE BENEFITS WERE NOT WITHDRAWN FROM MALAYSIA THIS YEAR, HE WAS CERTAIN THE MTUC WOULD TRY AGAIN NEXT YEAR TO HAVE THE COUNTRY DROPPED FROM THE LIST OF RECIPIENTS.-- BERNAMA

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