

Dr M: MTUC in plot to hurt industry

JERANTUT, Sat. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that MTUC leaders who claim to champion human rights are involved in a plot to force the closure of American electronic companies in Malaysia.

The Prime Minister, who singled out MTUC president Zainal Rampak and secretary-general V. David, said these leaders were party to a plot by US trade unions which he said wanted American factories here to close down.

"What the AFL-CIO wants is that a strong electronics union be set up to represent workers in American companies here so that the union can then stage strikes and cause lengthy disputes over wages to cause losses to the companies.

"They want the companies to suffer losses so that they will eventually be driven to closure and be forced to shift their operations back to the US where American workers will get the jobs.

"The AFL-CIO's plot is aimed at getting the large American factories here to shift back to their own country at the expense of the 130,000 Malaysian workers employed in these factories at present," he told about 3,000 people in Kampung Pulau Mansok here.

Dr Mahathir said the American labour organisation was using the GSP petition as a bargaining tool to pressure the Malaysian Government into succumbing to their demands for the setting up of a strong union.

He said it was no secret that Malaysia needed to maintain the GSP privilege as the duty exemption would allow local goods to be marketed widely in the US.

"But what has really surprised us is that the two MTUC leaders are also joining in. Mr David has even said that the MTUC will assist the Government in its bid to maintain the GSP only if the Government agreed to the AFL-CIO demands,"

he said. S

He said he could understand why the AFL-CIO wanted a union which would stage strikes frequently but failed to understand why Encik Zainal and Mr David were supporting the move.

"To me, we should stand to protect the interest of our 130,000 workers in a situation like this where outsiders are opposing the interests of our country.

"We should not even stop to think whether we are right or the outsiders are right. Our first impulse should be to stand behind our own people. We do not instead turn against our own nation and endorse that the foreigners are right and that is why they should be supported," he said.

He said Semangat 46 and the DAP were also out to topple the Government and warned the people that if the opposition won the next election their decisions would be favourable to the AFL-CIO as they would be "indebted"

to the American trade unions.

"They do not have good intentions and if they succeed, we will be the victims. I fear to think what our future would be then and I hope the people will not be misled by their propaganda," he added.

The Prime Minister, accompanied on his pre-election visit to Jerantut by his wife Datin Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Ali, later presented 60 bicycles to schoolchildren from remote areas as well as six sampan engines to fishermen. He also presented a tractor to the Pulau Tawar farmers organisation.

Also present were Menteri Besar Tan Sri Haji Mohamed Khalil Yaakob, Culture and Tourism Minister Datuk Sabbaruddin Chik, Human Resources Minister Datuk Lim Ah Lek, Youth and Sports Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak and Jerantut MP and Deputy Finance Minister Datuk Wan Abu Bakar Wan Mohamed.

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