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MAHATHIR-WORKERS
BM

KULIM, JULY 14 (BERNAMA) -- PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TODAY URGED FACTORY WORKERS NOT TO BE INFLUENCED BY A SMALL GROUP OF TRADE UNION LEADERS OUT TO CREATE PROBLEMS AND JEOPARDISE THE PRODUCTION SYSTEM IN THE MANUFACTURING SECTOR.

HE SAID FOREIGN TRADE UNIONS THROUGH THEIR REPRESENTATIVES IN LOCAL UNIONS SUCH AS THE MALAYSIAN TRADES UNION CONGRESS (MTUC) WOULD TRY TO INCITE WORKERS TO CREATE PROBLEMS IN THE HOPE THAT FOREIGN INVESTORS WOULD CLOSE THEIR OPERATIONS IN THIS COUNTRY.

IF THIS WERE TO COME ABOUT, FACTORY WORKERS WOULD LOSE THEIR JOBS WHILE PEOPLE IN OTHER COUNTRIES WOULD BENEFIT WHEN FOREIGN INVESTORS RELOCATE THEIR OPERATIONS THERE, HE SAID.

ADDRESSING FACTORY WORKERS AT THE SEKOLAH MENENGAH KEBANGSAAN KULIM HERE, DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID WORKERS COULD RESOLVE ANY PROBLEMS THROUGH DISCUSSIONS AND THERE WAS NO NEED TO GO ON STRIKE.

HE SAID THERE WERE TRADE UNIONS SUCH AS IN THE UNITED STATES WHICH WISHED TO SEE FOREIGN INVESTORS CLOSE THEIR OPERATIONS IN MALAYSIA SO THAT THE PEOPLE OVER THERE COULD BENEFIT ONCE THE FACTORIES WERE RELOCATED THERE. -- MORE

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THE PRIME MINISTER SAID CERTAIN LOCAL TRADE UNION LEADERS WERE CO-OPERATING WITH FOREIGN TRADE UNIONS IN EFFORTS TO BOYCOTT GOODS PRODUCED BY THE MALAYSIAN MANUFACTURING SECTOR.

SUCH TRADE UNION LEADERS, UNDER THE GUISE OF PROTECTING WORKERS' RIGHTS HAD THEIR OWN VESTED INTERESTS AND WANTED TO SEE THE CLOSURE OF FACTORIES IN MALAYSIA.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE GOVERNMENT ENCOURAGED FOREIGN INVESTMENT IN THIS COUNTRY THROUGH THE GRANTING OF PIONEER STATUS SO THAT THEY WOULD CREATE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES AND TRANSFER TECHNOLOGY TO LOCAL WORKERS.

+WE WANT TO ATTRACT MORE FOREIGN INVESTMENT UNTIL ALL AVAILABLE WORKFORCE IN MALAYSIA WAS TAKEN UP,+ HE SAID.

IT COULD BE SEEN EVERY YEAR THOUSANDS PASS OUT FROM SCHOOLS LOOKING FOR JOBS, HE SAID.

MORE THAN 3,000 WORKERS FROM 20 FACTORIES IN THE KULIM INDUSTRIAL AREA ATTENDED THE FUNCTION. ALSO PRESENT WERE DATUK SERI DATIN PADUKA DR SITI HASMAH, WIFE OF THE PRIME MINISTER, KEDAH MENTERI BESAR DATUK SERI OSMAN AROFF AND INFORMATION MINISTER DATUK MOHAMED RAHMAT. -- MORE

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THE PRIME MINISTER SAID EXTREME DEMANDS SHOULD NOT BE MADE TO THE EXTENT OF PUSHING UP PRODUCTION COSTS.

+WE DO NOT WISH TO SEE A SITUATION SUCH AS IN SOME COUNTRIES WHERE HIGH WAGES HAVE RESULTED IN THE PRICE OF GOODS GOING UP AND UNABLE TO ENTER FOREIGN MARKETS,+ HE SAID.

THE PRIME MINISTER LATER HAD LUNCH WITH THE FACTORY WORKERS AT THE SCHOOL HALL. -- BERNAMA

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