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MAHATHIR-GSP

SEREMBAN, AUG 17 (BERNAMA) -- THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT REJECTED ALL THREE PETITIONS SEEKING TO REMOVE MALAYSIA'S PRIVILEGES UNDER THE GENERALISED SYSTEM OF PREFERENCES (GSP) BECAUSE IT WAS CONVINCED THAT MALAYSIA DOES NOT EXPLOIT WORKERS, PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD SAID TODAY.

THANKING THE US GOVERNMENT FOR HAVING CONSIDERED THE MATTER WITH FAIRNESS, HE SAID THE DECISION HAD SAVED WORKERS IN THIS COUNTRY FROM THE POSSIBILITY OF LOSING THEIR JOBS.

+WE ALSO DO NOT HAVE TO FACE THE PROBLEM OF HAVING TO PROVIDE JOBS TO THOSE WHO WOULD HAVE BECOME UNEMPLOYED,+ HE TOLD A NEWS CONFERENCE AT THE SEREMBAN MUNICIPAL COUNCIL HALL.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT MAKE ANY COMPROMISES WITH THE US GOVERNMENT ON THE MATTER BUT HAD OBTAINED THE ASSISTANCE OF CERTAIN PEOPLE TO EXPLAIN THE ACTUAL SITUATION IN THE COUNTRY RELATING TO THE ALLEGATIONS OF EXPLOITATION OF WORKERS.

INVESTORS FROM THE UNITED STATES ALSO HELPED TO EXPLAIN THE LABOUR ADMINISTRATION PROCEDURES IN THIS COUNTRY TO THE US GOVERNMENT, HE SAID. -- MORE

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HE SAID THE GOVERNMENT LOOKED AFTER THE INTERESTS OF WORKERS IN THE COUNTRY, BUT THIS DID NOT MEAN THAT IF THEY WENT ON STRIKE INDISCRIMINATELY IT WAS FOR THEIR GOOD.

HE SAID IT HAD BEEN NOTICED THAT SEVERAL DEVELOPED COUNTRIES WHERE WORKERS WENT ON STRIKE FREQUENTLY HAD BECOME LESS DEVELOPED.

+IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT IN THIS COUNTRY, WHILE WE ALLOW WORKERS TO TAKE INDUSTRIAL ACTION, THE RIGHT TO STRIKE MUST BE USED IN A PROPER MANNER,+ HE SAID.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT PLAN TO APPROVE LEGISLATION TO PREVENT UNION LEADERS FROM BELITTLING THE COUNTRY BUT WOULD CONTINUE TO EXPLAIN TO WORKERS THE IRRESPONSIBLE ACTIONS OF CERTAIN UNION LEADERS.

HE SAID NOT ALL UNION LEADERS WERE IRRESPONSIBLE. THERE WERE ONLY TWO OR THREE, WHO WERE ACTUALLY POLITICAL LEADERS, AND WHO HAD JOINED UNIONS TO INFLUENCE THEM AND GAIN POLITICAL MILEAGE. -- MORE
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THESE LEADERS, HE SAID, GAVE PRIORITY TO THEIR POLITICAL INTERESTS AND NOT THE INTEREST OF WORKERS. THEY WERE PREPARED TO ALLOW WORKERS TO LOSE THEIR JOBS SO LONG AS THEY THEMSELVES GAINED POLITICAL INFLUENCE.

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR SAID THAT IN MALAYSIA WORKERS WERE FREE TO STAGE STRIKES BUT THEY SHOULD NOT BLAME THE GOVERNMENT IF THEIR ACTIONS BROUGHT ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES TO THEMSELVES.

THE PRIME MINISTER, WHO WAS ON A DAY'S VISIT TO NEGERI SEMBILAN, ATTENDED FRIDAY PRAYERS AT THE MASJID JAMEK AMPANGAN, HELD A CLOSED-DOOR MEETING WITH THE STATE BN COMMITTEE AT WISMA NEGERI AND MET BN SUPPORTERS AT THE SEREMBAN MUNICIPAL COUNCIL HALL. -- BERNAMA
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