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Mahathir-democracy

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KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 30⁴⁰ (Bernama) [Ⓟ] -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today hit out at pressure groups in the country using democracy as a pretext to cajole and prevent the people from exercising their right to choose.

+Democracy for us means the right of the people to determine who to elect to govern or form the government which will run and administer so that the majority of the people can live free from pressures,+ he said when opening the Umno General Assembly here.

He said the government was not the only who could commit oppressions and wrongdoings. Other groups in a democratic society could also commit oppressions with whatever influence and power at their disposal, he added.

While naming the Malaysian Bar Council as one such groups, he said its +attack+ against the courts, by trying to commit the Lord President to jail, proved that the it was the Bar Council, not the government, that interfered in the freedom of the courts.

He said the lawyer involved in the case, when charged with contempt of court, was found guilty and fined only \$5,000. On the other hand, if he had succeeded in his action against the Lord President for contempt of court, the Lord President would lose his job -- a most heavy penalty indeed, he added. -- more.

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+We respect the court but can an attempt to commit a judge, the highest judge at that, be considered as respect for the court on the part of the Bar Council?+ he asked.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president, said this was a clear example of how a non-government organisation could suppress society and silence critics by threaten court action.

In the recent general election, he said a trade union group was used as a tool by a group of politicians for their self-interest when trade unions' functions were to protect the interest of the workers not for politics.

There were politicians who said that the interest of workers would be better protected if their leaders were involved in politics and could form the government but experience in other countries had shown that the workers' fate took a turn for the worse, he said.

In the light of this, he said the government would have to re-think about the role of the trade unions which were first formed more than 200 years ago at the start of the industrial revolution as there were no laws protecting workers, unlike now.-- more.

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He reminded workers not to resort to industrial action to back their claims as this would jeopardise country's chances of having more foreign investors.

To resolve workers' claims through confrontation and threat will lead to the closure of factories, and going on strike to resolve problems between two sides is tantamount to a boxing match to determine the winner,+ the Prime Minister said.

He said that if at times the government's action was seen as against industrial action, the reason being not that it was anti-workers but because it was pro-workers.

+The government wants the workers to have more income and greater purchasing power, so that with more income the workers can buy more goods, and this will help the development of the market which will in turn help other industries,+ he said.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said the allegation that the government was anti-workers through some of its actions was not true because whatever action taken was for common benefit.

He reminded workers not to be hoodwinked by the apparent sympathy shown by the West towards them for it was all intended to eliminate competition between companies in their countries and those in Malaysia. -- Bernama.

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