

PM: Foreign unions could ruin our economy

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MALACCA: The economy could be ruined if foreign unions worked together to boycott the country, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

He said the Government was not unduly worried about being expelled from the International Labour Organisation but was more concerned over repercussions from foreign unions incited by local union leaders.

Dr Mahathir said if Malaysia was barred from the ILO, local unionists were likely to pres-

sure their foreign counterparts to act against the country.

"For example, they may urge union members in foreign countries to boycott Malaysian goods and port workers not to handle Malaysian cargo.

"If they do such things, our economy can be seriously undermined," he said.

Dr Mahathir was speaking to newsmen after opening the \$300 million Hualon Corporation (M) Sdn Bhd textile factory at Tangga Batu, near here.

He said local union leaders

could resort to such actions because of their close affiliation to foreign labour bodies.

"We know who these people are. They do these things because this is their only work," he added.

Dr Mahathir said the Government would not act against such leaders but would expose their tactics to workers.

The Government would, he said, remind workers that they had jobs because of the Government's efforts and not because of unionists.

"If given the choice union leaders would rather have a situation where there are fewer job opportunities so that they can strike and threaten employers. It is politics," he said.

Dr Mahathir said union leaders received high salaries although they did not work like ordinary workers.

"They look for opportunities to group workers so that they can be leaders. While others work, they as leaders travel abroad for conferences and courses," he added.