

PM: ILO suspension will affect workers

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By Jeffrey Ramayah

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — The possible suspension of Malaysia's membership by the International Labour Organisation will affect workers in the country but not the Government, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said the actions of the Malaysian Trades Union Congress which could precipitate such an eventuality were tantamount to harming Malaysian workers.

"MTUC president Zainal Rampak had admitted that the International Metalworkers Federation's move to seek Malaysia's suspension was prompted by MTUC's complaints to the ILO that Malaysia refused to fully implement two ILO conventions on the freedom to associate and the right to bargain collectively.

"The actions of MTUC leaders in making false complaints which would adversely affect the workers and not the Government simply mean that they are doing injustice to those who voted them into office," he said after receiving the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, Sultan Azlan Shah, at the Kuala Lumpur international airport.

The King and the Raja Permaisuri Agong, Tuanku Bainun, returned this evening from a two-week official visit to Norway.

Dr Mahathir said it was the MTUC that lodged the complaints as the ILO would otherwise not have known about the allegations.

He said MTUC leaders should not resort to any action that would result in workers losing out in terms of employment and technical and financial aid for their training programmes.

He said the Government, on the other hand, had car-



DR MAHATHIR

...MTUC harming workers

ried out development programmes to increase workers' income besides improving their standard of living.

"There is now a shortage of workers and this means a demand for them which would result in employers paying more to attract people to fill vacancies.

"The Government has been able to create more employment opportunities through development programmes.

"All our efforts to improve the income of workers were not done through strikes or other industrial action which the MTUC resorts to," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the Government would continue to improve the lot of all workers in the country without making them lose in any way such as resorting to moves taken by the MTUC which were detrimental to the interests of workers.

Asked about the possible implementation of **hudud** laws by the Kelantan State Government, Dr Mahathir said the Federal Government would be taking steps to amend the Constitution to enable the opposition

Pas-led State Government to implement such laws.

"But the Federal Government will not enforce hudud laws which allow the cutting of hands and limbs for criminal offences such as stealing and would not allow any State Government in the Barisan Nasional to do so.

"Since the Kelantan Government wants to enforce such laws, we will amend the Constitution as we do not want to be accused of hindering their efforts to impose such laws," he said.

He said the Government did not have to enforce **hudud** laws to convince anyone that it is Islamic.

He said many Islamic countries do not enforce **hudud** laws and instead, like Malaysia, follow laws that are in line with modern times and situations.

The Prime Minister expressed surprise at the statement by DAP secretary-general Lim Kit Siang that the party would be in the forefront to oppose any move by the Kelantan Government to impose **hudud** laws on non-Muslims and would challenge such actions in court.

"Why should Lim oppose actions taken by Pas when his party supported Kelantan Menteri Besar Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat and his party in the 1990 general election?"

"We know for sure the DAP supported Pas in the general election because the Chinese voters in Kota Baru who had been loyal to the Barisan Nasional in previous elections voted for Pas in the last general election.

"We always field a non-Malay candidate from the Barisan Nasional for the Kota Baru State seat but in the previous election the Chinese did not support us because of the influence by the DAP," he said.