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Mahathir-Unions

UNION LEADERS DO NOT UNDERSTAND MALAYSIA INC CONCEPT

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 13 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today there are still union leaders who do not understand the Malaysia Incorporated concept although the concept had been launched since the early 1980s.

The prime minister said this lack of understanding was reflected in their response to the government's intention to see workers' unions playing a more active role to make the concept a success.

"It appears that (the worker's unions) do not understand. They regard participating in Malaysia Inc as allowing them to trade," he told reporters after presenting the Prime Minister's Golden Hands awards to winners of the Seventh Malaysia Skills Contest at the Technical Teachers Training College, here.

Last month Cuepacs president Mohamed Mat Jid said the government must amend the Workers' Union Act to enable the unions to participate in business if it wanted them to play an active role in making the Malaysia Inc concept a success.

He said this in response to Dr Mahathir's speech when launching the Langkawi International Dialogue that the government wanted the workers unions to play their role to make the concept a success.

The prime minister said Malaysia Inc was aimed at promoting a partnership among the public and private sectors and political leaders who strove to make Malaysia a success in various field through the concept of a company.

"It has nothing to do with business. Only the (trade unions) help to make our country a success by working harder, improving efficiency and cooperating with the employers, government and the politicians, it does not mean allowing them to take up business," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that when Malaysia succeeded like a company all strata of society would enjoy the fruit of the success.

The government would benefit in terms of tax collection, the private sector would make business profits and the workers would get wage increases.

He said the government intended to take trade union leaders on foreign trade mission in future but they must be prepared to cooperate with the government in attracting foreign investors.

The prime minister said a trade union leader had once joined a trade mission overseas but he was more interested in talking on workers' rights like wages, employment conditions and other demands to the extent of scaring off the investors.

"We should say that we are prepared to cooperate, work hard, learn and to ensure that the investor would make a lot of profit.

"Then when he gets a lot of profit he can pay us a bit more. But no, he goes and talk about their rights only," he said.

Asked about his meeting with Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat at the Prime Minister's department this morning, Dr Mahathir said Nik Aziz sought the federal government's cooperation for several projects in that state.

He said Nik Aziz also touched on the political situation in Kelantan but the federal government felt that it was PAS' problem with Parti Melayu Semangat 46.

-- BERNAMA

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