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Call for study on effects of privatisation

VOICING a pro-worker perspective, Senator Zainal Rampak has urged the Government to carry out a study to find out if privatisation has adversely affected the people.

Zainal, who is also Malaysian Trades Union Congress president, said the Government must not be overzealous when implementing such projects, especially those relating to health care and education.

"Privatisation has enabled Malaysia to sustain high growth while enabling the nation to keep up infrastructure demands arising from the rapid industrialisation process," he said.

However, he said, there were concerns that privatisation would incur an additional burden.

"Often, the Government has to lend a hand in privatisation projects undertaken by companies which run into financial difficulties. "This indirectly increases taxes and prices of consumer goods."

Supporting Zainal on the wages of workers, Senator Datuk V.K.K. Teagarajan urged the Government to allow a monthly salary system for estate workers.

Estate workers had been sidelined and their needs were not being taken seriously by the Government, he said.

Senator Abu Bakar Ismail rapped those who criticised the Government and its leaders but at the same time, benefited from the country's developments.

He said that despite accusations of dictatorship hurled at the Prime Minister, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had taken everything in his stride and went all out to prove his critics wrong.

"He is a man of vision and guts - qualities which we seldom see in politicians and leaders," he said.

"He is outspoken and stands up for his country's rights, pride and dignity." He urged Dr Mahathir to reveal the identity of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's crony who benefited from government contracts and projects.

Touching on the need for research and development, Senator Tan Ek Huat expressed his disappointment over the nation's R&D efforts.

Both the private and public sectors should make full use of the R&D allocation as the country was lagging in various fields, he said.

"The officers in charge should not be too bureaucratic when considering applications for R&D works," he said.

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