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Zainal-Labour

MTUC REQUESTS DR MAHATHIR TO SOLVE LABOUR ISSUES IN SARAWAK

KUCHING, April 13 (Bernama) -- The Malaysian Trades Union Congress (MTUC) will seek Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's assistance to speed up the extension of the Employment Act to Sarawak.

Its president, Zainal Rampak, said today the progress by the Human Resources Ministry and the Sarawak government in incorporating the Act, which is currently used in the peninsula, into the Sarawak Labour Ordinance, was far too slow.

"Workers in Sarawak are deprived of so many benefits and protections enjoyed by their brothers in Semenanjung and we cannot let this go on any longer," he told a media conference, here.

Earlier Zainal opened a course on Occupational, Safety and Health organised by the Sarawak MTUC branch and the Social Security Organisation (Socso) and attended by more than 30 trade union leaders in the state.

Zainal said the MTUC had received many complaints, especially during the current economic downturn, from workers in Sarawak that they were being retrenched and their salary deducted without their being consulted.

It was sad that the benefits in the Employment Act were not enjoyed by workers in Sarawak after so many years of independence, he said, adding that the business community was among the groups opposed to the extension of the Act to Sarawak.

He said the Sarawak Labour Ordinance had so many weaknesses and loopholes that it could not provide sufficient protection for the welfare of the workers in the state.

"Section 24 of the Employment Act, for example, clearly states that no salary deduction be made if the workers do not give their consent but here, a company can deduct workers' salary as it likes," he said.

Zainal said the MTUC had been talking about extending the Act to Sarawak for more than 10 years without any positive result and thus, was seeking the prime minister's help.

On the National Retrenchment Scheme (NRS), he said the scheme would be extended to Sarawak and Sabah to ensure that workers in both states were protected from any retrenchment exercise carried out by their employers.

-- BERNAMA

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