

PM criticises MTUC

Dr M: Proposed nationwide picket against EPF will not solve problems

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LANGKAWI, Sun: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad hit out at the MTUC today for its planned nationwide picket against the EPF, saying such an approach will not solve problems.

The prime minister said: "If they think that through such an act it will help the economy recover, then continue... we (the government) feel that if there are problems, they cannot be resolved through picketing."

He said now is not the time to raise issues because the country is facing a lot of problems,

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"Let's not raise other issues as we already have a lot of problems," he told reporters after attending a briefing on the progress of the Tanjung Lebung yacht building and repair yard project here.

Mahathir was asked to comment on the decision by the MTUC to hold a nationwide picket on May 12 over what it claimed is "a lack of sensitivity to contributors' interest" on the part of the EPE.

Asked if he is willing to meet the MTUC on the matter, Mahathir said: "They did not meet me before making the announcement, so it will be difficult to meet them."

The MTUC announced its decision to hold the picket this morning (see Page 3).

On another matter, Mahathir said it did not surprise him that PAS

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PAS will make all kinds of accusations, says Mahathir

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has termed as "haram" the goodwill payment (*bayaran ehsan*) channelled to Terengganu in replacement of oil royalty

"It is easy for PAS to pass a decree on various issues. If they do not agree, they will make all kinds of accusations. PAS will do anything to spread malicious lies about

people even to the extent of branding Muslims, including me, as apostates," he said.

On the Indonesian government's clarification on its diplomat's presence at the closed-door briefing held by Parti Keadilan Nasional president Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, Mahathir said he welcomes the explanation.

"We do not have problems in accepting the explanation

because we always wish to have good relations with our neighbours," he said.

Indonesian Foreign Affairs Minister Alwi Shihab admitted that its diplomat committed an error because of his failure to cross-check the status of the meeting and believed it had clearance from the Malaysian government.

During his one-day visit, Mahathir inspected the pro-

gress of work at the snake sanctuary, launched the RM45 million cable car system project at its base, the Oriental Village, and inspected work on the beautification of Sungai Kuala Melaka.

He also visited Berjaya Langkawi Beach and Spa Resort where he held talks with mariner Datuk Azhar Mansor and was briefed on the development of five-star properties.