

MTUC open to discussions, says Zainal

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PETALING JAYA, Mon: The Malaysian Trades Union Congress (MTUC) is open to discussions before launching its nationwide picket on May 12, its president, Zainal Rampak, said today.

The picket is intended to address matters which, MTUC claims, reflect a lack of sensitivity on the part of EPF towards contributors' interests.

Zainal said the MTUC hopes that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will agree to meet with it and discuss the issues as that is what the grassroots want and need.

Speaking to reporters

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after the launching of the MTUC women's forum by Women and Family Development Minister Datuk Shahrizat Abdul Jalil, he said the general council will meet on April 20 to decide on the next move.

Commenting on Mahathir's criticism of the MTUC's decision to hold a nationwide picket, Zainal said: "We are not against the government's efforts and have no intention to paralyse or embarrass the government."

"Whatever action we take is in the interest of the nation and its workers. I would also like to reiterate, that this is not a strike but just a picket and will not cause chaos to the economy," he said.

Zainal said currently the EPF investment panel is not answerable to the 18-member

board which has only five workers' representatives.

"We should be aware of EPF's investments because as workers' representatives, we also have to ensure that the returns on investments are good," he said.

Zainal said EPF dividends have dropped almost every year and MTUC is afraid that it will go down to the minimum 2.5% stipulated in the EPF Act.

The MTUC has also expressed its concern over the retaining of EPF savings by retired contributors.

Zainal said some well-off contributors retain a large sum of money in the EPF as the dividends paid out are higher than that offered by banks, resulting in other contributors receiving lower dividends.