

12 MAY 2001

Mahathir-workers

DO NOT BE INFLUENCED BY FOREIGN UNIONS, WORKERS TOLD

KUALA LUMPUR, May 12 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today reminded Malaysian workers and union leaders not to be influenced by foreign unions which were trying to instigate them into making unreasonable demand from their employers.

He said these foreign unions wanted to cripple Malaysia's industries and write the country off as a competitor in the international market.

"They try to instigate the workers and union leaders to make unreasonable demand, go on strike and so on with the intention to make us less competitive and our goods expensive.

"They have no sympathy for our workers. What they want is to see our workers making unreasonable demand, causing problems and cannot compete with their products," said the Prime Minister at a special rally in conjunction with the Workers Day 2001 at the Putra Stadium in Bukit Jalil, here.

Dr Mahathir said if the workers were taken in by such tactic the country's industrialisation process would halt, the workers would lose their jobs and the country would suffer, opening the door to market monopoly by foreigners.

Speaking to reporters later, he said foreign union leaders had in the past urged their local counterparts to seek better treatment and higher pay as well as resorting to industrial action.

"Alhamdulillah our workers are not that interested in making excessive demand, preferring instead to negotiation rather than confrontation.

"As such, we continue to maintain our competitiveness. That is why we can produce the same goods but at cheaper prices," he said.

Dr Mahathir had also in his address stressed the importance of preserving the country's stability to create a favourable investment climate.

"The country's development depends on stability without which we will not get investment not only from outside but inside the country," he said.

He said the government wanted more investment not because it wanted to collect more revenue but to create as many employment opportunities as possible for the people.

During the function, the Prime Minister also presented several awards, including the Worker of the Year 2001 Award to Kenzer Tan Heck Wee and Rohana Abdul Rahman.

Tan is the Overall Quality Management and Communications Manager of Infineon Technologies (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd while Rohana is the section leader at Elektrisoal (Malaysia) Sdn Bhd.

Today's gathering was attended by more than 200 contingents from the private sector and institutions of higher learning.

-- BERNAMA

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