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Mahathir-MTUC

RESOLVE LEADERSHIP TUSSLE, AVOID POWER STRUGGLE, SAYS MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 24 (Bernama) -- Malaysian Trades Union Congress (MTUC) leaders should resolve their leadership tussle and avoid a power struggle, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

Advising the MTUC leadership to solve their problems amicably, the Prime Minister said that it was important as the leadership crisis might affect its members.

"I think it is for the MTUC to solve their problems and there shouldn't be any power struggle. It may affect the members (of the congress)," he told reporters after launching Technology Park Malaysia's first made-in-Malaysia computer numerical control (CNC) machine, the Master CNC 10HVA, here.

He was asked to comment on the MTUC crisis following the decision of its president, Senator Zainal Rampak, to complete his term and dishonour the pact pertaining to its leadership succession.

Zainal's decision not to hand over the leadership to his deputy, Mohamad Shafie B.P. Mammal, as agreed under a memorandum of understanding signed by the unionists in February, has plunged the MTUC into a leadership crisis.

Several of the 230 affiliates have come out openly to criticize and ask Zainal to honour his word to prevent the nation's largest labour body from losing its credibility and respectability.

Asked to comment on the pact signed by the two unionists and Zainal's action in dishonouring the pact, Dr Mahathir said that he had no view on the matter.

"But as far as I'm concerned, when I say I'm going to step down in October, you can take my word that I'm going to step down. What's the people's view, does not matter," he said.

Asked whether he has any plan to meet the two unionists if the leadership crisis were to prolong, the Prime Minister said: "No, I don't think so. I think the MTUC can resolve (the problem) by themselves."

On whether the issue involved the integrity of an individual, Dr Mahathir said: "I'm not making any comment."

Asked on the move by Singapore which was reported to have blocked the entry of foodstuffs from Malaysia, citing various reasons including poor quality, Dr Mahathir said that such allegations should be investigated.

"If it's true, then it's a form of discrimination against us, we have the right to complain but if our product is of poor quality, there's a basis for their allegation, we cannot complain," he said, adding that Malaysian producers had to ensure that their products meet world standard.

Fama Director-General Datuk Wan Ibrahim Wan Daud was reported to have said today that Malaysia was losing its status as the biggest exporter of foodstuffs to Singapore following the move by the republic to come up with various reasons for blocking the entry of foodstuffs from across the Causeway.

The Prime Minister, who was also asked whether the government would regulate the collection of zakat (tithes) following a recent incident of alleged unlawful collection of zakat, said that the public should pay their zakat at designated centres.

Asked to comment on the imminent attack by the United States on Iraq, Dr Mahathir said: "Well, looks like there's going to be war but I hope and pray that there won't be any."

-- BERNAMA  
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