

MAHATHIR-COOPERATIVES.

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Overseas Dispatch

LONDON, JAN 15 (BERNAMA) -- THE GOVERNMENT IS THINKING OF WAYS TO MINIMISE THE LOSSES BROUGHT ABOUT BY THE RECENT COLLAPSE OF THE CO-OPERATIVE SOCIETIES, BUT IT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE TO BAIL OUT ALL OF THEM, PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR MOHAMMED SAID HERE YESTERDAY.

HE SAID PEOPLE HAD ASKED WHY, IF THE GOVERNMENT COULD HELP OUT IN THE BANK BUMIPUTRA MALAYSIA FINANCE (BBMFL) AFFAIR, IT COULD NOT NOW HELP OUT THE COOPERATIVES.

THE REASON IS THAT, WHILE THERE WAS HOPE OF RECOVERING THE LOSSES IN THE BBMFL RESCUE, THE 24 CO-PERATIVES NOW FACING DIFFICULTIES HAVE NO HOPE OF RECOVERY, THE PRIME MINISTER EXPLAINED.

SOME HAVE ASSETS WORTH NOT MORE THAN TEN OR TWENTY PER CENT OF THEIR DEPOSITORS' MONEY, HE SAID.

DATUK SERI DR. MAHATHIR SAID THAT THESE COOPERATIVES HAD BEEN CREATED BY THEIR OWN EXECUTIVES WHO MISUSED THE FUNDS HELD BY THEM FOR PROPERTY SPECULATION.

THE GOVERNMENT IS NOW LOOKING INTO THE ACCOUNTS OF THESE INSTITUTIONS, HE SAID. SOME HAVE BEEN FOUND TO BE FACING GENUINE HARDSHIP, BUT EVIDENCE OF THEFT HAD BEEN FOUND IN OTHERS, HE ADDED.

THE PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT THE ACTIVITIES OF THESE +CROOKED EXECUTIVES+ WERE NOT FOUND OUT DURING THE BOOM TIME WHEN THERE WAS A LOT OF MONEY AROUND. BUT NOW, WHEN THAT (BOOM) NO LONGER PREVAILS, THEY HAVE BEEN EXPOSED.

-- BERNAMA