

# PM: Sabahans' arrest not tied to politics

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — The arrest of three Sabahans under the Internal Security Act for alleged involvement in a plot to pull Sabah out of Malaysia was not politically-motivated, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said the arrests had nothing to do with the Sabah state elections next month and would not benefit the Federal Government.

"How can it benefit the Federal Government politically... (if it was politically motivated) it will only incur the wrath of Sabahans," he added.

"We are politicians. We have no authority to decide who should get arrested and who should not. It is up to the (police) officers responsible," he told reporters after chairing an Umno supreme council meeting.

Dr Mahathir said the police were free to act accordingly, adding that the law enforcers should not be restrained by politicians.

Dr Mahathir was asked to comment on remarks by Sabah politicians in their election campaigning that the arrest of the three was due to politics.

The three are Sabah Air

chairman and Kadazan-Dusun Cultural Association executive secretary Benedict Topin, ex-police detective Damit Undikai and ex-policeman Albinus Yudah.

All are said to be staunch supporters of the Parti Bersatu Sabah headed by Chief Minister Datuk Seri Joseph Pairin Kitingan.

Datuk Seri Pairin has asked that the three be given a court trial and said that as far as he knew, there were no indications that they were part of a plot to take Sabah out of Malaysia.

Dr Mahathir said there were people who claimed they were being victimised politically after they had broken the law "simply because they happen to be politicians."

He said enforcement agencies like the Internal Revenue Department, the Anti-Corruption Agency and the police were free to act according to their discretion.

"They do not practise favouritism," he added.

On calls by Sabah parties that the state be given more royalty from oil, Dr Mahathir said the Government's stand was that oil belonged to the Federal Government.