

B GE 07-03 00164 EF531

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Mahathir - Arafat (requested repetition) ''

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SERDANG, March 7 (Bernama) ⁹ ³ Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the people of Palestine should not be made the victims of the Gulf war.

It would be most unfortunate if the people of Palestine were made to suffer the consequences of the war, he said.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir said this when asked to comment on reports that Saudi Arabia would only give financial aid to the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) if Encik Yasser Arafat was not at its helm

+As far as we are concerned we have nothing to decide on the matter,+ the Prime Minister told newsmen after visiting the Malaysian Agricultural Research Development Institute (Mardi) head office here.

+What we wish to see is that the people of Palestine should not be made the victims of any mistakes made by others,+ he said. -- more(end of repeat)

♥07/03/21-41MST

CNS1072

U GE 07-03 00172 EF515

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Mahathir - Arafat 2 Serdang

According to recent agency reports Palestinians in Kuwait were being tortured by the Kuwaiti military and by certain Kuwaitis because of the PLO support for Iraq in the war.

On the Federal Government's decision to reduce log and sawm timber exports from Sabah, the Prime Minister said the forest situation in the state was very bad now.

He said the Sabah Government did not appear to care at all about the forest situation in the state and its effects on the state and environment.

The Federal Government even when the Parti Bersatu Sabah (PBS) was in the Barisan Nasional had directed it to check exports but it did not pay any heed.

The Prime Minister said the Federal Government was very disappointed over the way the Sabah Government was spending revenue from timber for the development enjoyed by the people of the state was not commensurate with the large areas that had been logged. -- more

♥07/03/17-52MST

CNS1077

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Mahathir - Arafat 3 Serdang

He dismissed claims that the move breached the rights of the state government.

+We will not breach the state's rights. We will not do anything which is beyond our power,+ he said.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir also said the 10 per cent discount in electricity tariffs had been withdrawn for five types of industries as they no longer needed this following the country's economic recovery.

By way of example, he said the discount was given to the hotel industry when the occupancy rate was very low but now it was no longer so. -- Bernama

♥07/03/17-54MST