

PM: MIC can set up trust fund

By Saiful Azhar Abdullah

JITRA, Sat. -- The MIC should undertake to set up a trust fund similar to the Amanah Saham Bumiputera and Amanah Saham Nasional to help local Indians, Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The Prime Minister said the Government had no plans to arrange for the setting up of the trust fund which MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu suggested when addressing his party's general assembly last night.

Dr Mahathir was replying to questions on the matter from newsmen.

Datuk Seri Samy Vellu had suggested that the Government set up the trust fund because the ASN and ASB had been very successful for Bumiputeras.

The MIC president said the trust fund for the Indians would further develop the nation's economy.

On whether the Government was considering using the Internal Security Act to detain Al-Arqam chief Ustaz Ashaari Muhammad for propagating the deviant Aurad Muhammadiyah Tari-

kat (path), Dr Mahathir said the Government was gauging whether the activities of the leader undermined the country's stability.

The Prime Minister said the *tarikah* propagated by Ustaz Ashaari had deviated from the true teachings of Islam.

"We cannot allow the Muslims to be exposed to this teaching as it will confuse them," he added.

Dr Mahathir said there were people, including university students, who were so influenced by the movement that they have aborted their studies and joined the movement.

"We also heard of foreigners, who had embraced Islam, being persuaded to marry members of the Al-Arqam movement which had claimed that it was in accordance with the Islamic teachings."

Commenting on the outcome of the Singapore election early this month where the opposition won four seats from the ruling People's Action Party (PAP), Dr Mahathir said:

"Although it lost four seats, it does not mean the PAP has failed. I think PAP has achieved excellent success and it will not affect its

ability to administer and develop the republic.

"The PAP had a good victory.

"We have no intention of having a system without opposition although on many occasions the opposition does not give constructive ideas but there are times when their views are useful.

"We will continue to accept the fact that under the democratic system, we must have an opposition," he added.

Earlier, speaking at the opening of the Kubang Pasu Umno division's delegates' meeting here, Dr Mahathir said there were attempts by foreign trade unions to hamper the country's economic growth by influencing their local counterparts to resort to unhealthy activities.

The Prime Minister said the support and concern shown by the foreign trade unions were merely a ploy to disrupt the country's economy.

"These foreign trade unions are influencing the local trade unions to demand higher wages and other benefits and motivate the trade unions to stage protests by organising strikes and other trade actions in the hope that it will upset

our economic growth."

When these foreign trade unions show some concern by claiming that our workers are being victimised, certain leaders of the trade unions seem to be fallen into their traps, he added.

"These trade union leaders should realise that the West is not at all happy with our efforts in gearing towards making Malaysia a developed nation.

"Several attempts have been made including trying to prevent the realisation of the proposed East Asian Economic Group (EAEG)," Dr Mahathir said.

The Western countries envied the country's creditable economic achievements and this was the reason why there were attempts to influence local unions.

On Vision 2020, the Prime Minister criticised certain quarters for criticising the vision by saying that it was un-Islamic.

"These people do not realise that the opportunity to enhance their religious knowledge and enjoy excellent living standards are the result of Government's policies," he said.