

Royalty not above law

By Jeffrey Ramayah

KLJALA LUMPUR, Sat. — The privileges accorded to royalty do not extend to "killing or beating". Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

The taking of a life or of property can only be done with legal sanction and after due-process of the law, the Prime Minister added.

Therefore, while members of the royalty were given certain privileges, this did not mean that they were above the law.

The Prime Minister was responding to questions by newsmen on the events which followed the forced withdrawal of the Maktab Sultan Abu Bakar (MSAB) hockey team from the Malaysian Hockey Federation-Milo Champion Schools tournament in Kuala Lumpur on Nov 25.

MSAB pulled out of the semi-finals against Sekolah Menengah Taman Ehsan Kepong a few hours before the match was due to begin at the Stadium Tun Razak in Jalan Duta on the order of the Johor Education Department director Abdul Rahim Busu.

Following the withdrawal, MSAB coach Douglas Gomez, 52, called for the resignation of all Johor Hockey Association principal office-bearers and criticised the leadership for "destroying" hockey in the State.

On Monday, Gomez was summoned to the Istana Bukit Serene in Johor Baru and was in the palace for about four hours.

Subsequently he issued a written statement retracting his earlier comments. It was learnt he sought medical treatment in a private clinic on Tuesday for bruises on the face and stomach.

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was later assaulted.

"This kind of incident should not have happened in this modern era although it could have taken place in ancient times.

"Even if we may not be able to take legal action against certain people, those responsible for abducting individuals to certain locations and later cause them to be assaulted are not protected by the law.

"Action can be taken against them for abetting," he told reporters after opening the 39th MIC general assembly (See *Also Page 2*).

Asked if he knew whether a police report has been lodged following the latest

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incident, Dr Mahathir said he has yet to be informed of the matter.

He added that he would be sad if there was no police report lodged after the incident.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysians should not be afraid when it came to matters relating to justice. The law protected them and no person or party could do anything to them that was not in accordance with the law.

Asked what form of action the Government could take to prevent such incidents from recurring, he said it would study in detail how to enforce laws so that no one could be victimised for no apparent reason.

Asked whether there were previous incidents of this nature, Dr Mahathir said he had heard of such

The Prime Minister's firm response to the issue was followed by an advice to anyone who may have been wrongly treated not to be afraid to report to the police.

He called on victims of assault by anyone to report the matter to the police so that action could be taken.

Dr Mahathir said that the Government was not going to keep quiet over the matter.

"No person has the right to assault another, and the Government will provide protection to those who have been wronged."

The Government would have to act against those who kill or beat people, he added.

Dr Mahathir said: "The Government is very sad and disappointed to hear of an incident when a person was taken to a palace by certain people, and there are stories that it seems that the person

cases but no reports were ever lodged.

"We believe this is because the victims are scared to lodge reports fearing serious repercussions.

"We have even heard of people being assaulted just because they drive fast."

Asked if it was necessary for anyone to appear in a palace when summoned, Dr Mahathir said such summonses had no legal authority and it was up to the individual to go or not.

"No one can force anyone to go to the palace."

On the forced withdrawal of the MSAB hockey team from the tournament, Dr Mahathir said outsiders should not interfere with Government affairs.

"We are very sad that those outside the Government have been giving orders to civil servants," he added.