

Cabinet decides to impound Abdullah's passport

KUALA TERENGGANU, Thurs. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the Cabinet had decided that the passport of Melewar Corporation Berhad chairman Tunku Abdullah Tuanku Abdul Rahman be impounded for visiting Israel.

He said the decision was made at yesterday's Cabinet meeting although the matter was not on the agenda.

"Usually, when a person misuses his passport, the Government will take it back," he said in response to questions from newsmen on whether the Cabinet has decided to impound Tunku Abdullah's passport.

Dr Mahathir said this at the Sultan Mahmud Airport just before leaving for a two-day visit to Langkawi.

He was in Terengganu for a two-day visit during which he opened the 9th World Taekwondo Championship (ITF) at Sultan Ismail Nasiruddin Shah Stadium here this morning.

However, he said he did not know if Tunku Abdullah's passport had already been confiscated by the authorities.

"Probably they have, but I have not heard," he said.

Tunku Abdullah had recently visited Israel and had discussions with Prime Minister Yitzak Rabin.

Tengku Abdullah's visit had been described by Israel television as a political breakthrough to establish ties between the two countries.

Among those at the airport to send Dr Mahathir off were Menteri Besar Tan Sri Wan Mokhtar Ahmad, State Executive Councillors and members of the Barisan Nasional component parties.

In Kuala Lumpur, attempts to contact Tunku Abdullah at his office were unsuccessful.

However, a spokesman confirmed that Tunku Abdullah returned from Japan last week but had not turned up at his office. She said she did not know if his passport had been impounded.

She said Tunku Abdullah, who had issued a statement to clarify his visit to Israel while in Japan, had said that he would not be issuing any more statements on the matter.