

# Airport security: Stop pointing fingers, says PM

By S. Jayakrishnan

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — Stop blaming each other: This is the message from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to all those involved in airport security.

Expressing disappointment at the way those responsible for the latest security breach at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport in Subang were blaming each other, the Prime Min-

ister said:

"Sometimes when we remind them they get angry and then they become too strict. That's also not good. We can carry out duties in a systematic and proper manner but without being any less effective."

Dr Mahathir said this when asked to comment on last Saturday's incident at Terminal 3 of the Kuala Lumpur International Airport in Subang after an Indonesian woman took a Ma-

laysia Airlines flight to Kota Kinabalu without a boarding pass.

The Prime Minister said this after attending a Hari Raya gathering at the Kelab Bukit Perdana in Jalan Datuk Onn today.

Asked if he felt that whoever was responsible for the latest breach should be sacked, Dr Mahathir said he was waiting for a report from the Chief Secretary to the Government Tan

Sri Ahmad Sarji Abdul Hamid who had been directed by the Cabinet to investigate.

Dr Mahathir said those in charge of airport security should also not wash their hands because "I find that when we focus our attention on one party the other party appears not to take its job seriously."

"I hope all the parties at the airport will carry out their inspections systematically."

Dr Mahathir, who is also the Home Minister, said although steps had been taken to prevent incidents like breaches of security at the airport, such incidents would continue if people did not take matters seriously.

About 500 people, comprising mostly staff of the Prime Minister's Department and club members, attended the gathering. Also present were Ahmad Sarji, Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk

Abang Abu Bakar and Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Sulaiman Mohamed.

Dr Mahathir said he was not prepared to issue any warning to those involved to buck up and added half in jest: "Let others give warnings. If not I will become unpopular and we are close to the (general) elec-

PLEASE TURN TO  
PAGE 2, COL 1

# Opposition rapped for practising

□ FROM PAGE ONE  
tion ... so there is no need for the officers to get angry and not vote for me. They may even not vote for the Barisan Nasional."

Asked if the police would be entrusted with the task of ensuring airport security, Dr Mahathir said although this could be done, too heavy a burden must not be placed on the police.

"This is not a question of deploying the police or otherwise. So long as an officer carries out his duties in a proper and systematic man-

ner then incidents like this will not occur."

Asked who was the regulatory body for security at the airport, the Prime Minister said inside the airport it was the responsibility of Malaysia Airports Berhad and the Department of Civil Aviation.

In the incident last Saturday a 36-year-old Indonesian woman was half way on her flight from Kuala Lumpur to Kota Kinabalu before the crew discovered that she had no boarding pass.

The incident occurred on

board MH2626 around 8.27pm. Investigations are being conducted to determine how the woman managed to board the plane without being detected.

On the arrest yesterday of DAP's Kota Melaka MP Lim Guan Eng under the Printing Presses and Publications Act 1984 for allegedly publishing false news, Dr Mahathir said he regretted the actions of the Opposition party.

He said it appeared that the Opposition expected the authorities not to make any

arrests when they committed a wrong but took a different stand when it involved those in the Government.

Dr Mahathir said the Government was firm in handling such matters irrespective of who was involved.

"But when Opposition party members are detained they (Opposition party members) hold demonstrations, lodge police reports, unfurl flags and make it a political issue.

"I want to know from the Opposition if they want to

## double standards

be exempted from the country's laws and if it should be just Government officials who should be arrested."

Dr Mahathir said DAP informed the foreign Press that they were being harassed by the Government and added that he was puzzled by their action.

"Are the Opposition parties in Malaysia privileged. If they commit *khalwat* it's okay, utter seditious statements also okay but Government officials cannot (do so)."

Asked if he thought it was

a political gimmick by the DAP in view of the coming election, Dr Mahathir said he did not know.

"On our part if we do not want this problem and if we had power we could say do not arrest him for now. But this is not our responsibility; but a matter for the (police) officers to decide and the decision is up to them."

Earlier, Ahmad Sarji said he would look into all aspects of the airport incident before submitting a report.

Asked if he was treating the case urgently, Ahmad

Sarji added that this was usually the case whenever anything involved the country's security or its aircraft.

Later, Dr Mahathir and Dr Siti Hasmah hosted a Hari Raya Puasa party for former students of the Sultan Abdul Hamid College, Alor Star, at Sri Perdana.

The gathering, which was attended by more than 1,000 was organised by the Sultan Abdul Hamid Old Collegians' Association.

A seven-member MAS combo band provided light entertainment.