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Mahathir-Law

ENTERTAINMENT OPERATORS TO BE CHARGED IF CLIENTS USE DRUGS

ALOR SETAR, Jan 30 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the government will introduce a law to charge the operators of entertainment centres if drugs, including the hallucinatory Ecstasy pills, are found in their premises.

The Prime Minister said the owners or managers of entertainment centres would be deemed as collaborators in the trafficking of drugs if their clients were found using narcotics in their premises.

"Soon we will make it a responsibility of the owners of entertainment outlets," he told reporters on arrival here today to break fast with local people at the Universiti Utara Malaysia mosque in Sintok.

He was asked to comment on the decision of several states to order entertainment outlets to close by midnight to curb the spread of social ills.

Dr Mahathir said the government did not stop the people from enjoying entertainment but it was concerned about entertainment centres abusing their permits.

"We give people the right to enjoy themselves but we find that Ecstasy pills are used in entertainment places, and there are some who danced as if they had lost all their senses.

"We won't bother if it is only entertainment, but we have to act when it involves the trafficking and use of pills."

He said the early closure of entertainment outlets might harm the tourism industry a little but the government had to take firm action to curb social ills and unhealthy culture at such places.

The government would observe developments and take the appropriate measures, he said.

Asked whether entertainment places in holiday resorts such as Langkawi could be exempted from the early closure ruling, he said: "We cannot make any exception in Langkawi because the local people also visit such places. When night falls, just go to sleep...12 midnight is enough."

On the log smuggling issue in Sabah, Dr Mahathir said he had handed over all the documents on the case to the Anti-Corruption Agency (ACA) for investigation.

"I received letters from the Primary Industries Ministry and the Sabah government, and I have handed (them) over to the ACA. Until the ACA completes its investigation, I do not want to comment," he said.

Asked on the performance of Malaysia Airlines (MAS), which came under public scrutiny recently following claims of deteriorating services, Dr Mahathir said news of the airline's problems could have been started by stock market speculators in a bid to depress the price of the company's shares in order to buy them cheap and reap profits when the price rebounded.

He said MAS was facing a shortage of key staff, particularly experienced pilots and cabin crew, and the government hoped it could solve the problem quickly.

"I am sure various measures are being taken to solve the problem but I am also aware it cannot be overcome in the blink of an eye," he said.

On the problem of illegal immigrants, Dr Mahathir said he agreed with the opinion of the Police Inspector-General Tan Sri Rahim Noor that the situation was critical.

The Prime Minister said the illegal immigrants were causing many

problems to the government.

"Many come in and can't find jobs. We have to establish detention places and feed them. Why should we bear this burden?"

He said the government offered opportunities to foreigners to work in this country but they must go through the proper process. -- BERNAMA

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