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Pahang bans gift-giving at functions

KUANTAN, Mon. - The Pahang Government, acting on the decision of a Barisan Nasional ruling, today ordered all organisers of functions to stop providing gifts.

It is a blanket order covering government departments and agencies as well as the private sector with immediate effect.

Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohd Khalil Yaakob said today the State Secretariat's protocol unit had been asked to come up with a circular regarding the new directive to be distributed to the respective parties.

Food, however, is not on the list.

For rural hosts, it is a common practice to present leaders with fruits to honour their presence.

"At other functions or ceremonies, politicians or officials are not allowed to accept any gifts or souvenirs," he said during the tea break of the State Assembly.

Khalil said if the organisers insisted on honouring their guests, it could be in the form of books or other reading materials which would then be donated to public libraries.

"Pahang welcomes the guidelines on this," he said.

On Saturday, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, in chairing the BN meeting at the Putra World Trade Centre, said gifts and souvenirs received by BN politicians and government servants should be sent to the Finance Ministry to be valued.

"These souvenirs are meant only as tokens, but sometimes they cost thousands (of ringgit).

"As such, we will decide on the souvenirs that can be accepted by recipients."

(END)