

25 MAR 1999

Police-Mahathir

TELEKOM HELP SOUGHT TO TRACE CALLER

ALOR SETAR, March 25 (Bernama) -- The special police team probing the death threat on Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has sought the cooperation of Telekom Malaysia to trace the telephone number of the caller.

Kedah police chief Datuk Nik Ismail Yusof said the team comprising officers from the Criminal Investigation Department (CID) had also recorded statements from the officers and staff of the Welfare Services Department as the caller had identified himself as an officer of the department.

The team would also interview politicians and others who could assist in the investigations, he told reporters after witnessing the Police Day parade and presenting commendation letters to 22 policemen and seven civilians here today.

Former Kedah Menteri Besar Tan Sri Osman Aroff lodged a report on the death threat to Nik Ismail at the state police headquarters on Tuesday.

In his report, Osman, who is Dr Mahathir's personal assistant in Kubang Pasu, said that he received the threatening call from a man at his residence in Jalan Menteri at about 12.50am last Sunday.

The caller, who identified himself as an officer from the Welfare Services Department, had asked him to inform Dr Mahathir to cancel his working visit to Kedah failing which " we will shoot Dr Mahathir if he comes."

Nik Ismail said police did not rule out the possibility that the telephone call was merely a political gimmick or the work of those out to create trouble.

He said police would not compromise on security and that was the reason why security was beefed up during Dr Mahathir's two-day visit to Kedah on Sunday.

He said the case was being investigated under Section 507 of the Penal Code which carries 11 years' maximum jail sentence, upon conviction.

Among the civilians who received the commendation letters were State Education Director Hassan Hashim and Mohd Zahari Morad, a Bernama reporter from the Kedah bureau.

Asked to comment on tonight's gathering by PAS, Nik Ismail said it was an illegal assembly as no police permit had been issued.

He said PAS did not apply for a police permit for the gathering. He advised the public not to attend it.

According to the leaflets distributed to the public and published in Harakah, the party's official organ, the "Himpunan Perpaduan Rakyat Kedah" (Kedah People's Unity Gathering) would be held at a place between the Darul Aman Stadium and Kampung Mergong, Jalan Putera at 9pm.

Nik Ismail warned the organisers that police would be forced to take action if they went ahead with the gathering.

He said police have taken action against two organisers of PAS gatherings in Jitra last month for breach of ceramah rules.

-- BERNAMA

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