

16 MAR 2000

Mahathir-Banks

GOVT MAY BLACKLIST BANKS STAFFED BY OPPOSITION SYMPATHISERS

JITRA, March 16 (Bernama) -- The federal government might follow the footsteps of the Melaka government and stop dealing with banks whose workers could not be trusted, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

"How do you trust a bank whose workers are against you and who have been known to reveal secret documents?," he said.

Speaking to reporters at the end of his Hari Raya Aidil Adha open house at Dewan Jitra, here, Dr Mahathir said he was aware that some bank employees were strong opposition supporters.

He advised them to be professional in carrying out their duties.

He was asked to comment on the Melaka government's plan to withdraw fixed deposits from two commercial banks after some of their staff were found to be supporters of opposition parties.

Dr Mahathir said some staffers at the two banks had copied the Melaka government's cheques and displayed them on the Internet as though the government had done something wrong.

Dr Mahathir said their actions would affect the banks' credibility.

Asked what sort of action could be taken, he said: "It is difficult. The only thing we can do is don't deal with the banks anymore."

The Prime Minister said such incidents were not restricted to Melaka but also happened in other places, including Kuala Lumpur, where bank workers revealed government documents and transactions made through banks.

Answering another question, Dr Mahathir also said the government might blacklist businessmen who followed his entourage overseas but did not take business seriously.

"I am saddened by such things. Many joined the delegation to Indonesia because Malaysia wanted to forge strong economic ties with the country but instead they played golf and sang at karaokes there," he said.

He was commenting on Finance Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin's statement that some businessmen who accompanied the Prime Minister to Indonesia skipped official meetings or briefings to spend time at golf courses and karaoke sessions.

Dr Mahathir also said the government planned to build a road linking Durian Burung in Padang Terap in Kedah and Thailand in a move to further develop the border areas.

-- BERNAMA

JM TS