

Findings on KMM to be made public

SUN 2 8 2001
Govt will come out in the open with an explanation: Dr M

By **Muhammad Husairy Othman**

IPOH, Sat: The government will gather all the necessary facts related to the arrest of several leaders of the Malaysia Mujahidin movement (KMM) under the ISA before coming out in the open.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the government has no choice but to come out with an explanation on the issue although it might be prejudicial.

Speaking to reporters at the end of his visit to Perak at the Sultan Azlan Shah airport here today, Mahathir said the case will be heard in court "so we do not want to prejudice this case by making announcements".

"The government is caught in a dilemma as to whether to come out in the open with the facts as there are laws in the country (which have to be observed).

"Our laws are more stringent compared with those of other countries where there were instances when a case was being heard in court and yet still openly discussed in the media," the prime minister said, citing O.J. Simpson case as an example.

"At the same time, the Opposition is using this (arrest of KMM members) as a political issue.

"They say this is a *sandiwara* (a play) by the government - which actually allows police to shoot and kill people."

Criticising the Opposition for being irresponsible, he said the government has no choice but to come out in the open and explain the actual scenario to the public.

Mahathir said the Opposition should make an announcement that the involvement of its members in such militant movements is of their own accord.

"This should not be a political issue ... they should say that this is

not the policy of their party, that their members like the Kelantan menteri besar's son had acted on their own," he said.

In a related development, Mahathir said the government will increase patrols at the country's borders to curb the smuggling of weapons from neighbouring countries.

"These smugglers now resort to numerous means to avoid detection and bring in these weapons.

"The government is aware that some of these weapons were smuggled in from Thailand and sought by militant movements in the country.

"We know the militants were buying the M-16s and that the KMM has tried to buy weapons from numerous sources," he said.

He said this when asked to comment on a report by a Malay daily that there is a shortage of weapons in the black market in Thailand because of the big demand.