

~~SUN~~ - 3 SEP 2001

## Tabung Haji seen as a bank, says Mahathir

**LANGKAWI, Sun:** Tabung Haji depositors have misconstrued the actual functions of the agency to be that of a commercial bank, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said the people save money with Tabung Haji, hoping it will yield higher returns than fixed deposits in banks, when the objective is to save money to perform the haj in Mecca.

"I'm afraid that many people consider Tabung Haji a bank and expect to earn better returns on investments than they get from fixed deposits," Mahathir told reporters before leaving for Kuala Lumpur after inspecting progress on development projects on the resort island.

Tabung Haji was earlier in the news following reports of fraudulent withdrawals of more than RM7 million of depositors' savings.

Earlier today in **PENANG**, the Islamic Affairs Adviser to the prime minister, Tan Sri Dr Abdul Hamid Othman, said the RM7 million will be replaced.