

Dismissal of Tati officials blasted

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By Sharon Kam

The Terengganu PAS government's dismissal of top officials of an institute of higher learning in the state for refusing to hand over the special payments given by the federal government directly to the institute became the focus of the Malay dailies this week.

The move, which some parties believed was politically-motivated, were described by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad as cruel.

"That is cruelty - hiring people to work for you and then dismissing them without any hearing or show-cause."

Mahathir was commenting on *Berita Harian's* report on Monday on the action taken against the chief executive officer of the Terengganu Advanced Technical Institute (Tati), Prof Dr Mohd Zaki Abdul Muin, who was given 24 hours' notice last Thursday for allegedly disobeying the state government's orders and failing to hand over special payments channelled to the institute by the federal government.

The notice of termination was signed by State Secretary Datuk Senara Muda Mazalan Hashim.

Three days later, Tati's business and finance manager Ariffin Mohamad, who was appointed by Mohd Zaki, was dealt the same fate, apparently for exposing a scam involving two

machines worth RM1 million owned by the institute.

Mahathir commented that the terminations reflect the true character of the PAS government.

"At first, they said that the special payment is *haram*; now they want the money to be handed over to them."

He said if the federal government did the same thing to PAS supporters, it would be accused of being

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wicked and cruel.

In an interview with *Berita Harian*, Mohd Zaki questioned the move by the state government as the letter did not state any reason for termination.

Mazalan defended the move and said the termination was according to regulations.

He said action was taken against Mohd Zaki because he had disobeyed directives given by the state government many times.

He was also alleged to have employed unqualified people to work in the insti-

tute.

The state government had earlier directed 13 education institutions in the state, including Tati, to hand over the special payments which were channelled through the Education Ministry.

"The money was not handed over because Tati needed the money for its operations.

"The state government had accepted the explana-

Mentri Besar Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang said the action taken against Mohd Zaki and Ariffin was to restore the image of Tati, which was affected by bad management.

He added that both of them had been given three months to rectify the situation but nothing was done.

He also announced that the state government has identified a suitable and experienced candidate to head Tati.

Abdul Hadi said the state government took back the special payments to ensure that the money is properly allocated according to procedures.

The fate of 13 lecturers of Tati reportedly appointed by Mohd Zaki has yet to be decided by the state government.

Umno Kelantan's deputy liaison chairman Datuk Idris Jusoh said the special payments, meant for the development of education in the state, should be prevented from falling into the wrong hands.

In the latest development on Thursday, Ariffin told *Berita Harian* that he will expose more abuses of power and mismanagement if certain parties, including the state government, continue to slander him and Mohd Zaki.

Ariffin claimed that some board members and Tati officers have been going around telling students that they were sacked because their salaries were too high.

tion earlier. So why is it bringing the matter up again?" Mohd Zaki asked.

As for allegations that he was hiring incompetent and unqualified staff, he said the state should name the staff involved as the matter was never raised before.

Ariffin, when contacted on Wednesday, said PAS has failed to run the state government on the Islamic principles which it preaches.

"Instead, it has judged and sentenced a person without giving him a chance to defend himself."