

PM:

STAR 27 MAY 2002
**'CBT probes
irrespective
of positions'**

PUTRAJAYA: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said investigations into criminal breach of trust (CBT) cases involving certain individuals or organisations were carried out irrespective of the positions of those suspected.

But the Prime Minister said that if the investigations involved those close to the Government, the public would assume that those who deserved punishment would eventually go off scot-free.

"This is an unhealthy view. We have seen how many times Karpal Singh was prosecuted but got off. If he is close to the Government, he would become (a) victim. Why such bias against the Government?" he asked when speaking to reporters after attending the wedding of a daughter of one of his bodyguards, Fazilah Lazim, here.

He was asked to comment on news report on criticism by Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Dr Rais Yatim against enforcement authorities for not pursuing till the end CBT investigations involving certain individuals or organisations.

According to Rais, there were several "hot" cases during the investigations stage but nothing happened when they were completed, adding that this seemed to be a trend in the investigation of CBT cases in the country.

Dr Mahathir said that if people were found to have committed an offence, they would be punished irrespective of their positions.

"If he's an offender, he's an offender. Members in the Government had been punished, even sentenced to death, too," he said.

He said the investigations were not as simple as others might think compared to those who made accusations.

"It is easy to accuse. In the newspaper, you can accuse. You are free. It is all right to frame others; it's all right to shame others. When he is found not guilty, then he must be close to the Government," he said, describing it as "unfair."

Asked why Dr Rais did not raise the matter in the Cabinet, he said:

"I don't know. He didn't tell me." (Bernama)

NO BIAS