

PM: Boat owners may face action

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KUALA LUMPUR: The Government will look into whether action should be taken against boat owners or operators who do not enforce the wearing of life jackets among passengers.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the practice was important and enforcement had already been tightened previously.

"We will study whether to take action against them if they do not enforce the wearing of life jackets," he said yesterday after the groundbreaking ceremony for the Association of Wives of Ministers and Deputy Ministers (Bakti) Community Centre at Bukit Kiara.

Dr Mahathir was commenting on Monday's incident where eight participants of a

motivational course drowned near Pulau Peladang in Tasik Temenggor.

The participants were not wearing life jackets and police are investigating if the incident was caused by negligence.

Dr Mahathir also said the public should make it a habit to don a life jacket when they get into boats.

"Life jackets (are) not expensive. Anyone can buy a life jacket. When you get onto a boat, always wear a life jacket," he said, adding that this also applied to those who were good swimmers.

Drawing from personal experience, Dr Mahathir said that he always put on a life jacket when he gets onto boats.

In Taiping, Mentri Besar

Datuk Seri Mohd Tajol Rosli Ghazali said the state government wanted all boat operators at Tasik Temenggor to ensure that their passengers wore life jackets.

He said there was a need for such enforcement as boat operators had been taking the safety of the passengers too lightly.

"If boat operators insist that their passengers put on a life jacket, the possibility of drowning when the boat capsizes can be minimised.

"It will also give the authorities enough time to carry out rescue operations," he said after opening a state-level academic carnival at SM Raja Tun Azlan Shah yesterday.

Tajol Rosli said boat operators would also be warned about the danger of over-loading.