

PAS actions over payments cruel and 'haram', says Dr M

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PORT DICKSON: The Federal Government views the action by the PAS-led Terengganu government to terminate a chief executive officer of a training institute in the state as drastic and deems its taking away the *wang ihsan* (compassionate payment) from the institute as *haram*.

"If we had done such a thing, they (PAS leaders) would be the first ones to call us cruel. The truth is that we know that there are many traitors in the civil service yet we still keep them and have not sacked them.

"But not so with PAS. The moment they come into power, they become cruel themselves," Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad told reporters after witnessing the passing-out parade of recruits at the Army Basic Training Centre here yesterday.

The Prime Minister was commenting on media reports that the Terengganu government had sacked the CEO of the Terengganu Advanced Technical Institute (Tati), Prof Dr Mohd Zaki Abdul Muin, for allegedly going against directives regarding the receiving of the compassionate payment from the Federal Government.

The sacking was reportedly due to the CEO's refusal to "return" the money to the

state government, which has been at loggerheads with the Government over the oil royalty issue ever since PAS took over the east coast state from the Barisan Nasional.

The letter terminating Dr Mohd Zaki's service was signed by State Secretary Datuk Senara Muda Mazlan Hashim.

Mazlan, who confirmed the matter yesterday, said Dr Mohd Zaki was sacked because the state government was unhappy with him for going against state decisions.

The state government had, through an earlier circular, directed that all compassionate payment from the Government that was directly channelled to individual institutions must be returned to the state government.

Besides Tati, the Government had reportedly distributed funds under the *wang ihsan* scheme to 13 other institutions to finance their operations and activities.

Dr Mahathir said it was *haram* for the PAS government to take the money, which was meant for the institutions for their use.

He also said it was cruel of the PAS government to take such drastic action against an official simply because he had opposed the state's decisions.