

28 MAY 2002

Mahathir-Capsize

BOAT PASSENGERS MUST WEAR LIFE JACKETS, SAYS PM

KUALA LUMPUR, May 28 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that action may have to be taken against the party who failed to enforce the life jacket requirement in the incident in which a small boat ferrying 14 people without life jackets capsized in Tasik Banding in Gerik early yesterday.

Three people drowned and five went missing in the incident which occurred at about 2.30am.

The prime minister said that action would be considered against the party responsible.

He said that boat owners were required to provide life jackets to their passengers who were required to wear them.

He said that the life jacket requirement had been imposed a long time ago.

"We have always advised people to put on life jackets and this should be practised every time we get on a boat," he told reporters after the ground-breaking of the proposed Bakti community centre in Bukit Kiara here.

Dr Mahathir was commenting on the report of the mishap affecting participants of a motivational camp organised by a local tour operator for members of a direct-selling company.

The six survivors included the boatman who managed to be rescued. A search operation is underway.

Initial investigation by the police revealed that the boat was overloaded and those on board were not wearing life jackets.

Dr Mahathir said that he could not swim and always make sure that he puts on a life jacket when he gets on a boat.

"We don't know what will happen," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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