

Panel to check cloning of cheques

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LANGKAWI: A special body has been set up at the Finance Ministry to check forgery of government cheques.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said that all government financial transactions must be recorded periodically according to the specified format.

Mahathir, who is also finance minister, said the body would focus its attention on monitoring financial dealings of government departments and agencies, government-owned companies and statutory bodies.

"I want all transactions to be recorded periodically and accord-

ing to a certain format," he told reporters when asked to comment on the spate of government cheque forgery cases by syndicates in Penang, Malacca, Perlis, Perak and Negri Sembilan.

At least 26 people have been detained in connection with the cloning of government cheques totalling about RM5 million, including RM3 million from the Penang state government accounts over the last three years.

The forgeries are believed to have been masterminded by a 30-year-old unemployed man, who is being sought by police.

In **JOHOR BARU**, Menteri Besar Datuk Abdul Ghani Othman

said the state government would take precautionary steps although there were no cases of such fraud.

"So far, the state Treasury has not detected any forgery of cheques issued by it.

"I hope there is none," he said when asked to comment on measures taken by the Johor government following the forgery of 500 cheques of the Penang state government involving withdrawals of RM3 million.

On Wednesday, the Malacca government also reported a similar forgery case with 173 cheques worth RM1.29 million being cloned.