

03 OCT 2003

Mahathir-Suhakam

SUHAKAM NOT AUTHORITY ON EVERYTHING, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

LANGKAWI, Oct 3 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia (Suhakam) is not the authority to decide on everything that goes on in the country but could give its views on matters pertaining to human rights.

He said that Suhakam was not the authority to decide if public rallies could be held during the upcoming general election, but that authority belonged to the police as permission for public rallies depended on police permits.

"Whether or not rallies could actually be held, it's not for Suhakam to decide.

"If something were to happen, will Suhakam takes care of security, if clashes were to occur, those taking part fighting against each other, surely it's not Suhakam who will handle this, the police will be the ones handling this. So, just give its views, that's all," he said.

Dr Mahathir was asked to comment at a media conference at the Langkawi International Maritime and Aerospace Exhibition 2003 (Lima '03) here on the statement by Suhakam that political parties should be allowed to hold public rallies during the run-up to the next general election.

"Suhakam must not consider that it is the authority to decide on everything. Looks like Suhakam must decide on everything," he said.

To another question, he said that the Anti Corruption Agency (ACA) was free to begin investigation on anyone which it felt had done wrong according to the law.

Dr Mahathir was asked to comment on the ACA's move to start investigation on 14 Members of Parliament who have filed mileage claims amounting to more than RM10,000 a month.

"That's the situation. If you've done something wrong, we will investigate, doesn't matter who you are," he added.

-- BERNAMA

SR ZS RM