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Not feasible to conduct background checks

KUALA LUMPUR, Fri. - It is difficult to check the background of everyone who applies to become members of political parties, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

"It is difficult because it runs into millions," he said in reply to a question on the former Persiaran Gurney MCA branch chairman Ong King Ee, better known as "Jackie Chan" of the Sio Sam Ong triad.

He said the Government only vetted the background of those who joined the government service, by checking with the Anti-Corruption Agency, police and several other government agencies.

"We don't do a thorough check on those joining political parties. We have millions of members and there is no way to check thoroughly everyone at the branches. We have to accept them," he said after visiting Kraftangan Malaysia today.

"The party leaders have to be careful when they recruit members. Sometimes they are careless ... What they should do now is to be careful in accepting new members.

"We should not find out later that their members indulged in all kinds of immoral activities like sodomy. But if I find out I will take action," he said.

On the ACA investigation into former MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik's son Hee Leong's RM1.2 million corporate acquisition, Dr Mahathir said the ACA had carried out its investigation.

"If we don't trust the ACA, who else can we trust? ACA has taken action against many and have charged some in courts," he said.

On DAP chairman Lim Kit Siang's statement that he was informed by the ACA that the investigation had been closed, Dr Mahathir said that Kit Siang had to prove his claim.

Earlier, Dr Mahathir said that Malaysia was capable of producing quality handicraft products, but faced the problem of mass production.

He said that local businessmen should start small industries, especially in rural areas and villages.

"We cannot be relying on old methods, such as working from home, to produce handicraft items. We need small factories in villages so that the village people too can earn extra income by working in the factories," he said.

Dr Mahathir was accompanied by his wife Datuk Seri Dr Siti Hasmah Mohd Ali and Deputy Entrepreneur Minister Datuk Khalid Yunus.