

09/01/2003

PM: No clear statement yet

PUTRAJAYA, Wed. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today a clear statement would be made on the issue of polygamy only after discussions have been held with people well versed on the subject.

Asked if he supported the Perlis Government's move to relax regulations on polygamy, he said there should not be any undue arguments.

"We will have discussions with those who are well versed in the legal and religious aspects before making any statement," he said at the Putrajaya Lake Club after watching a demonstration involving a Rescue Hovercraft manufactured by AF Dot Engineering Sdn Bhd.

"I cannot make any statement yet. I have to study the matter first."

Dr Mahathir took a ride in the hovercraft, made with Japanese technology and which would likely see service with the Fire and Rescue Department.

A local Malay daily had last week reported that the Perlis Government was inviting men who wanted to take another wife to do it in the State.

Perlis mufti Datuk Mat Jahaya Husin was quoted as saying that the State Religious Council had relaxed the conditions for polygamy to prevent Malaysian men wishing to practise polygamy from going to Thailand.

On Monday, Perlis Menteri Besar Datuk Seri Shahidan Kassim said standardised procedures would safe-guard the family institution and he would propose that the matter be brought to the Ruler's conference.

Women and Family Development Minister Datuk Seri Shahrizat Abdul Jalil has said while she supported the Perlis call to have State Islamic family laws streamlined, she would bring the the issue to the Uniformity of Islamic Family Law Issues committee.