

# Cops deny Dr M's claim

KUALA LUMPUR: The police have never arrested anyone to be questioned for organising public gatherings for Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad. Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Musa Hassan said yesterday.

Police have never disrupted such gatherings, but instead had beefed up security for the former prime minister since the "pepper spray" incident in Kelantan on July 28.

He said the police had never created a situation where Malaysia could be considered a "police state".

Musa said this in a statement to Bernama in reply to Dr Mahathir's claims on Oct 27 that police would harass and threaten people trying to organise functions that might criticise Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

He had alleged that the organisers would be hauled up for questioning.

In his open letter issued recently, Dr Mahathir claimed that Malaysia had become a police state.

Musa said the police were now more open to public views "This can be seen from my series of dialogues with non-governmental organisations to discuss public complaints."

Musa said police had never turned

down any application to hold gatherings, except when investigations suggested that it could pose a threat to internal security and public order.

In considering an application, he said, the police would investigate whether there were seditious issues that could threaten security and public order or damage to properties or posed danger to people's lives.

On Mat Rempit or the illegal motorcycle racers, he said they were not only a menace on the road, but were also imitating the culture of the Hells Angels of the United States.

The negative culture perpetuated in Mat Rempit ran contrary to the Eastern culture which espoused courtesy and family values.

"If the menace spreads like an epidemic, the social ills could lead to the moral decadence of Mat Rempit, who are made up of youth, and eventually the group will fall prey to criminal activities," he said.

He was presenting a working paper entitled *Social Ills: The Reality Today* at the Islam Hadhari National Convention for Youth on the theme *Youth Spearheading the Hadhari Generation* at the Institute of Islamic Understanding Malaysia, here.