

Revealing the truth about three projects

Documents de-classified

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By K.H. LIM

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. — The Government has de-classified minutes of meetings where decisions were taken to embark on the Dayabumi Complex, Penang Bridge and national car projects, the Prime Minister said today.

~~Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad~~ said anyone could apply for the documents from the relevant ministries.

"Yes, we can release (relevant) parts of the documents to the Press," he said.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president, was speaking to reporters after attending a function to celebrate the 16th anniversary of Koperasi Shamelin Berhad at Wisma Tunku here.

allegations, but to clarify the situation.

"For example, the Dayabumi project ... all will know who actually made the decision to begin it. Or, the Penang Bridge project. Who made the decision?"

"All these are in the minutes of meetings between the MTN (National Action Council) and the Cabinet.

"If there are people going around giving the wrong information, then we have to correct the situation."

Dr Mahathir said he was aware his opponents in the party were alleging that he was the sole decision-maker.

He said he was even prepared to make public any personal correspondence in order to clear the air.

Umno secretary-general Datuk Seri Sanusi Junid recently claimed that Datuk Musa had written to Dr Mahathir demanding that he remove Tengku Razaleigh from the Cabinet.

The Prime Minister said de-classi-

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The Dayabumi, Penang Bridge and national car projects, involving billions of ringgit, had been criticised by the faction aligned to Umno presidential candidate Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah and deputy president Datuk Musa Hitam.

He said the documents had to be de-classified in order to make known the truth about the three projects.

This was in response to allegations made during the current Umno electoral campaign that he was the one who made all the decisions to embark on the projects.

"There are provisions in the OSA (Official Secrets Act) which allow certain Government secrets to be de-classified," he said.

"The power to de-classify and release them rests with the Ministers and the appointed Government officers concerned.

"If the Minister or officer feels the document can be de-classified, it can be done."

Responding to a question, he said the decision to de-classify the documents was made not because of the apparent tension in Umno over the

fication would be carried out within the provisions of the OSA.

He said anyone could ask the Minister or officer concerned to de-classify and release official documents.

Earlier, speaking to hundreds of Koperasi Shamelin members, he explained the need to maintain confidentiality and secrecy in certain matters.

"A lot of things have to be made secret. We may have to hide some of our feelings, even from our wives, so as to safeguard peace in the family.

"This is also the same for the country.

"Sometimes, we find there are people who spread stories which are far from the truth. Then, these secrets have to be exposed to inform all concerned of the actual situation and the truth."

He said this was especially true if someone was to write a letter, marked "confidential", and then spread false stories about its contents.

In such a case, he felt the contents of the letter must be released to clarify the situation. And, it would not be wrong to do so as "we are trying to right a wrong".

He said although Government secrets must be safeguarded, they could be de-classified to expose the truth "because there are people who spread lies".

"We have to expose the lies. Otherwise, many people will commit such offences and go free because the truth is in these secret documents.

"As part of normal Government procedure, we have to classify certain information or documents but they are not secret forever.

"When necessary, we have to de-classify them and inform the public."

He cited the case in which the United States administration was forced to reveal all decisions made in the secret arms deal with Iran and the contras of Nicaragua.

"The Government was forced to make public all its decisions to the public and President Reagan was found to be in the wrong.

"If I do anything wrong which can be exposed, then expose it."

He said he expected that those affected by the release of these letters and documents would ask why their letters had been de-classified.

Government secrets, he said, could be released for public consumption if it was important for the people to know what actually happened.