

NO LONGER

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A SECRET

Documents on three projects declassified

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. — Documents pertaining to the Penang Bridge, the Dayabumi complex and the Proton Saga car project, which were previously considered secret, have been declassified, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

He said the decision to declassify these documents was made "just for the purpose of clarification, and so that the people would know the truth."

"For instance, who made the decision on the Penang Bridge, the Dayabumi complex ... all these are in the minutes of Cabinet meetings."

"So, if anyone gives out false information regarding these projects, we can correct it by declassifying these minutes," he said in response to questions from reporters after opening the 16th anniversary celebrations of Koperasi Shamelin Bhd at Wisma Tunku here.

Asked when these documents would be released, Dr Mahathir said: "If people want to know, we can release them." He added that this included the Press.

Asked if these documents would be released before April 24, Dr Mahathir said that it would be done only "if it was necessary." He added that if the Press wished to know the contents of these documents, they could ask the Ministers concerned.

Dr Mahathir acknowledged that certain allegations were being made in Umno cam-

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paigns over these three projects. "It has been said at these campaigns that I made the decision (for these projects)."

Asked if the Cabinet had decided to divulge the documents pertaining to these three projects, Dr Mahathir said: "This is not a question for the Cabinet anymore. It is a matter for the Ministers."

"Every Minister is empowered, under the provisions of the Official Secrets Act, to declassify documents which are considered secret," he said.

Earlier, when opening Shamelin's anniversary celebrations, Dr Mahathir said Ministers and government officers were required to keep secrets.

"However, if someone writes a letter and next says something else which is not the truth, then we have to reveal the contents of the letter for the people to know the truth."

"We have to expose the contents. This is not wrong," he said.

He said Umno secretary-

general Datuk Seri Sanusi Junid was not wrong when he recently talked about the letter written by Datuk Musa Hitam to him (Dr Mahathir) to drop Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah from the Cabinet.

Dr Mahathir said this was aimed at putting right incorrect information. Certain confidential letters needed to be exposed because there were certain people "carrying tales" and liked to tell lies.

"Letters stamped Top Secret to the Prime Minister could be released if the writers spoke to the contrary about their contents."

He added that under the Official Secrets Act, Ministers and certain officers were empowered to declassify secret documents. He said if the rakyat were being told "untruths," then these secret documents could be declassified so that truth would prevail.

He referred to the expose of the illegal secret sale of firearms by the United States to Iran and Nicaragua, where the US Government later had to reveal all decisions on the matter.

"If I have made mistakes, expose them," Dr Mahathir said.

He also said that the Umno election was not just a contest for the party but for Shamelin as well. He said Shamelin succeeded as a co-operative on its own accord and as such, it was worthy of government assistance, should the need arise.

"However, if the leadership changes, the other people may be of the view that Shamelin did not require assistance. April 24 will also decide whether or not Shamelin continues or ceases to exist."