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MAHATHIR-MUSA
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PULAU PINANG, SEPT 3 (BERNAMA) -- DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR MOHAMAD TODAY CLARIFIED THAT HE HAD NEVER CHALLENGED MP FOR KOTA TINGGI DATUK MUSA HITAM TO SWEAR AS REPORTED IN A LOCAL NEWSPAPER RECENTLY. WHEN TOLD BY REPORTERS AT THE BAYAN LEPAS INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT HERE BEFORE LEAVING FOR KUALA LUMPUR THAT DATUK MUSA HAD RESPONDED TO HIS +CHALLENGE+, THE PRIME MINISTER SAID +I DID NOT CHALLENGE HIM (DATUK MUSA) TO SWEAR+.

HE EXPLAINED THAT WHAT HE HAD ACTUALLY SAID (AT A GATHERING IN JOHOR BAHRU ON AUG 22 WHICH WAS ATTENDED BY SOME 3,000 BARISAN NASIONAL BY-ELECTION WORKERS) WAS THAT HE (MAHATHIR) HIMSELF WAS WILLING TO SWEAR (THAT THE ALLEGATIONS WERE NOT TRUE).

DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR ALSO POINTED OUT THAT DATUK MUSA HAD DURING HIS TENURE AS DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER TAKEN AN OATH NOT TO REVEAL SECRETS.

THE REPORT STATED THAT DATUK SERI DR MAHATHIR HAD CHALLENGED DATUK MUSA TO SWEAR BY THE QURAN IN A MOSQUE THAT THE ALLEGATIONS THE LATTER MADE IN A VIDEO RECORDING ENTITLED +MUSA'S MESSAGE FOR ALL+ WERE TRUE.

DATUK MUSA WAS REPORTED TO HAVE SAID HE WOULD RETURN TO MALAYSIA NEXT WEEK TO ACCEPT THE +CHALLENGE+ TO PROVE THE TRUTH OF THE TAPE'S CONTENTS. -- BERNAMA

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