

# PM: A-G'S DECISION

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By Zulkifli Talib

**KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. —** ~~Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad~~ said today that the attorney-general used his discretion in advising the police to destroy videotapes and photographs stolen from MIC secretary-general D.P. Vijandran.

The Prime Minister, in reply to questions from reporters, said Tan Sri Abu Talib Othman had not consulted him in making the decision.

"If everyone has to refer to me, I will then have nothing else to do," Dr Mahathir said after inspecting a parade to mark Rela Day celebrations here.

Asked whether he backed the attorney-general's decision, Dr Mahathir said: "Unless someone can prove that an officer had deviated in the course of his duties, I cannot take any action against him."

Tan Sri Abu Talib had told reporters this week that he had advised the police to destroy 11 video-tapes and four envelopes of photographs and negatives "with the consent of" Mr Vijandran.

On the DAP's allegations of a cov-

er-up, Dr Mahathir said the DAP must prove it.

"But we must realise that the whole episode began some time ago and was originally a burglary case," he said.

"The question of what was in the safe did not arise then. Maybe the focus of the investigations was on the burglary and not the question of what was in the safe.

"If it had been raised earlier on, I am sure that the police would have taken the appropriate action," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the Government would not ask Mr Vijandran to take leave from his duties as Dewan Rakyat Deputy Speaker merely on allegations that he was involved in obscene videotapes.

"If we punish someone based only on unproven allegations, it will be an injustice," Dr Mahathir said.

"However, we will not want to allow someone who is proven to be involved in such activities to have a place in the Government."

Dr Mahathir said that even if Mr Vijandran were to take leave, the opposition would continue to raise the issue in Parliament.

"The DAP should not have brought up the obscene tapes issue in Parliament but instead reported

it to the police earlier on when they got the information.

"Then the police could have investigated and taken action against the person if he was guilty.

"However, it is clear the opposition is not interested in correcting what is wrong, but to gain political mileage from the issue.

"If we find someone has committed a crime, we will take action against him irrespective of whether he is from the ruling party or the opposition.

"At the same time, the opposition party must also be prepared to expose any of their own members who have committed crimes. Then this will be fair," he said.

Education Minister Anwar Ibrahim told reporters that Cabinet ministers may ask the Home Minister and the Minister of Justice to brief them on the investigations.

Asked whether Mr Vijandran would be asked to explain the issue, Encik Anwar said: "There is no need to call Mr Vijandran to explain to us. We can refer to reports from the police and the attorney-general."

This morning, the Bar Council met and called for the resignation of Tan Sri Abu Talib as attorney-general.