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MAHATHIR UNABLE TO ESTABLISH IF THERE WAS PALACE INTERFERENCE

Mahathir - palace ''

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KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 10 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight he has yet to establish if there has been palace interference in the award of contracts in Terengganu.

The Menteri Besar Tan Sri Wan Mokhtar Ahmad had already said that he had not been pressured by the palace in this matter, he told reporters after chairing a meeting of the Umno Supreme Council here.

+... if other people have proof of such pressure please produce it, it will be a little difficult for us to consider if sweeping allegations are made,+ he said when asked to comment on press reports on the claims by the Terengganu branch of the Bumiputera Contractors Association that the state government had given priority to Syarikat Seri Terukon Sdn Bhd.

The association had sent a memorandum to Dr Mahathir and Deputy Prime Minister Ghafar Baba urging them to review the system of awarding contracts in the state.

The company, however, denied the various allegations by the association and had stated that it too would send a memorandum to Dr Mahathir and Ghafar and to Wan Mokhtar in response to the earlier memorandum.

Dr Mahathir, who is Umno President, said he had yet to read the association's memorandum and only knew about it from press reports. -- more

▼11/02/00-28MST

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Mahathir - palace 2 (last) Kuala Lumpur

+I feel that we have heard an explanation on this matter, we only want to know whether it is valid or not.+

+So far I have not been able to establish if there has been interference from the palace and the MB had said there has been no pressure from the palace,+ he said.

Dr Mahathir said the issue was not discussed at the meeting which was also attended by Ghafar and Wan Mokhtar. -- Bernama

▼11/02/00-44MST