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BUSINESSMEN USE MY NAME, SAYS PM

Mahathir - name

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KUALA LUMPUR, July 4th (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today disclosed that several businessmen have resorted to using his name for their own gains claiming that they could influence the Prime Minister's or the government's decisions.

These businessmen would claim that they had met the Prime Minister for his blessings and that they could influence him and the government in approving a particular project, said Dr Mahathir.

+They demand kickbacks. Some said the kickbacks are meant for me,+ he told reporters after chairing an Umno supreme council meeting at the Putra World Trade Centre here.

Unfortunately, he said, some foreign businessmen were taken in by these claims because of similar experience elsewhere and they thought it was the same with Malaysia.

+There are people who wrote to foreign companies asking the companies to communicate with them as they could determine whether approval could be given because of their influence over me and the government, provided the companies give them kickbacks,+ he said. -- more

▼04/07/16-28MST

CNS3460

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Mahathir - name 2 Kuala Lumpur

+They claimed to have so much influence over me that if they phone me up, I would put aside everything else to attend to their call,+ he said adding that he had briefed the supreme council on the matter.

+I would like to stress here that no one is empowered to use my name and no one is given special rights to speak on my behalf,+ Dr Mahathir said.

He said although he had met several businessmen and entrepreneurs in the country, their meetings were only to promote private sector programmes which were sometimes disrupted by bureaucracy following their appeals.

Dr Mahathir acknowledged that he did at times intervene to ensure that the programmes succeed following appeals from the businessmen since the programmes were vital to national development.

+I have to intervene to overcome the problem and this does not mean they have an influence over me,+ he said.-- more

▼04/07/16-45MST

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Mahathir - name 3 Kuala Lumpur

The Prime Minister said all projects were studied through proper channels and if there were appeals, they were referred to him by his officers.

+People say they have just met the Prime Minister and that a project has just been approved... its true that they've come to see me because my job is to meet people but it does not mean that I am the approver,+ he said.

+They accuse me of having vested interests. I wish to make it clear here that I don't have any vested interests. My pay is enough for me.. the government has just raised my pay ... why do I need so much money,+ he said.

Dr Mahathir said so far action had been taken on a criminal case in which his signature was used.

He advised members of the public to get in touch with his private secretary if they came across such cases so that action could be taken.--
more

▼04/07/17-00MST

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Mahathir - name 4 (last) Kuala Lumpur

Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president, said the meeting was also briefed on the content of the Rulers' Declaration which the rulers are scheduled to sign at Istana Negara here this evening.

+Its content would be made known upon being given consent by the Rulers,+ he said.

He said the meeting also decided to hold a mass rally of Barisan Nasional youth members from throughout the country in Kota Kinabalu soon.

However, the date of the rally has not been decided yet but it would be held in conjunction with the formation of Malaysia on Sept 16.

It could be held much earlier or later depending on the time convenient for certain parties, he said.

The Prime Minister will attend the rally.

On speculations of an impending Cabinet reshuffle, he said:+ Let them talk about it ... Even if I deny it, they will still talk about it, if they want to.+

Replying to another question, Dr Mahathir said the issue of the purchase of a Lamborghini car by the Sultan of Kelantan has already been settled according to procedures. -- Bernama

▼04/07/17-27MST