

# PM: Be wary of those using my name

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**By Jeffrey Ramayah and Vijayan Menon**

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. — Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad told local and foreign investors to be wary of unscrupulous people who used his name to collect commissions by claiming that they could get projects approved without any difficulty.

He said they had even claimed that the commissions were meant for him and that the Prime Minister "is very close" to them.

"They try to give the impression that I will leave all my work just to entertain their calls," he told reporters after chairing a two-hour Umno supreme council meeting at the party headquarters here.

The Government had taken action against one person who had forged the Prime Minister's signature to mislead businessmen so that they could get favours through his connections with him (Dr Mahathir).

There were also other instances where his signature had been forged. However, it was difficult to take action against them as it was not easy to obtain the evidence.

"When confronted, these people would always deny their actions. They even tried to hoodwink the foreign investors by writing to them to say that they were in a position to expedite the approvals for proposed ventures," he said.

Dr Mahathir, who is also the Umno president, said

the supreme council discussed the matter after listening to his briefing.

"Nobody has been given power to use my name. If anyone is approached by these people, he or she should immediately contact my confidential secretary so that prompt action can be taken.

"I have many friends who are businessmen. There were occasions when I attended to their problems to ensure that the development projects were not delayed or abandoned.

"There were also cases where these people encountered problems due to administrative and other requirements and I intervened to expedite matters.

"This is in the interest of the nation as these projects

are important for the people," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that the unscrupulous people received commissions by claiming that they could get favours through his office.

"I do not need any extra money through commissions. My salary is more than enough and the Government has recently increased it.

"All applications for any project will have to go through the normal Government procedure and there is no question of anyone being able to get me to influence any decision or to provide short cuts," he said.

On the Lamborghini Diablo issue, Dr Mahathir said the relevant duties and taxes had been settled and "the matter is closed as far as the

Government is concerned".

Asked to comment on Opposition Leader Lim Kit Siang's claim that he (Lim) knew the identities of the people who paid the \$2.1 million in import duties for the car, he said: "The trouble with Lim Kit Siang is that he does not know what he knows."

Asked whether the illegal immigrants detained in detention camps would be given a second chance, Dr Mahathir added that they had been given six months to register if they wanted to work in the country.

"They were given sufficient time to do so and I do not understand why they waited until the last minute," he said.