

Govt orders probe into allegation against Rahim

THE Government has ordered an investigation to establish the truth about an allegation concerning the personal problems of Malacca Chief Minister and Umno Youth leader Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Thamby Chik.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said certain government agencies had been told to conduct the investigation.

He said if the allegation is true, the Government will decide on what action to be taken against the chief minister once it had received the official report.

Dr Mahathir said Rahim met him yesterday to explain the whole issue and denied that there was any basis to the allegation.

However, the Prime Minister said the Government wants to establish the truth from third parties.

"He met me just to say that there was no truth in the allegation ... that's his confession. I have to know from the third parties."

The Prime Minister made these comments when asked by reporters whether he had received any report concerning Rahim's personal problems and an allegation that Rahim was "involved" with a 15-year-old girl.

Dr Mahathir had earlier opened the 16th Asean Ministers of Agriculture and Forestry meeting at Langkawi Island Resort in Langkawi.

On Wednesday, Rahim

denied a newspaper report that he had personal problems that required him to relinquish both his posts.

He said the report was merely speculative and he would investigate the source of the report.

Rahim also said he was not aware of the allegation that he was "involved" with the 15-year-old girl.

The Prime Minister said that officially, he had not received any report on the allegation but he "heard stories about it."

Dr Mahathir said he could not pass judgment on Rahim before he received a detailed report.

"If I make a judgment now, it will look unfair. When we obtain information that the allegation is true, we will take action."

"For the moment, I am not going to make any further comment," he added.

On the fact that this was not the first time Rahim had been subjected to such allegations, Dr Mahathir reiterated that the relevant agencies are investigating.

In Kuala Lumpur, Information Minister and Umno secretary-general Datuk Mohamed Rahmat quashed suggestions of a crisis in the party's Youth movement.

"But even if a crisis were to develop due to these speculations, Umno is capable of handling it," he told reporters after seeing off Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim at the Kuala

Lumpur International Airport in Subang yesterday.

Bernama reports: In Alor Star, Rahim said he is ready to cooperate in any probe into his personal behaviour. "I am ready to cooperate to establish the truth," he said.

"I agree with the Prime Minister that there should be an investigation to establish the truth and end the speculation," he told reporters after attending the closing of a Kedah Umno Youth Division state level work camp.

Rahim said that he had briefed Dr Mahathir on the matter.

"It is better that an investigation be made into the allegation," he said in welcoming Dr Mahathir's statement on the matter.

He urged Umno Youth to be united to ensure Barisan Nasional's success.

In Kangar, the Perlis Umno Youth said it is prepared to defend Rahim's integrity in leading the movement. State Umno Youth head Ahmad Bakri Datuk Ali said in a statement speculation that Rahim will withdraw from leading the movement is baseless.

Bakri, an Umno Youth Exco member, claimed that the matter was raised by irresponsible groups with vested political interests.

"Perlis Umno Youth is prepared to defend Rahim as Umno Youth head or in facing any problem or issue that might crop up," said Bakri.