

10 APR 1997

Mahathir - exco

ACA NEEDS TO INVESTIGATE ALLEGATION AGAINST EXCO MEMBERS, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, April 10 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the Anti-Corruption Agency (ACA) has to investigate to determine whether there is any truth to various allegations including corruption against eight State Executive Councillors.

"This is normal. If there is suspicion that they are involved in corruption, the ACA must do its job to find out whether there is basis or not," he told reporters at the Sultan Abdul Aziz International Airport in Subang on his return from official visit to Kuwait, Bahrain and Pakistan.

He was asked to comment on today's front page news about eight State Executive Councillors from six states being investigated by the ACA for alleged involvement in corrupt practices.

To another question, Dr Mahathir said the ACA also needs to verify report connecting Selangor Menteri Besar Tan Sri Muhammad Haji Muhammad Taib with property ownership in Australia.

"If there is such a report, we have to see whether there is basis or not," he said.

"I know nothing of the matter, wait for the ACA (investigation). I don't want to influence the ACA, it's up to ACA to investigate," he said at a news conference also attended by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Last Monday, Anwar had told the Dewan Rakyat that Muhammad was under investigation for failing to declare RM2.4 million in cash in Australia as well as other cases.

According to Anwar, the ACA would also investigate a report relating to property ownership by Muhammad in Australia as published recently in the The Brisbane Courier Mail.

Asked whether ACA Director-General should be empowered to decide on prosecution of corruption cases instead of the Attorney-General, the Prime Minister said it is better if the AG studies cases concerned.

"I don't know the final points but usually if there is a case it must be submitted to the AG, or else it may be wrong in law ... so, it's better for the AG to study the case to find out whether it is correct in law," he said.

On Malaysia's proposal to acquire some stake in the troubled Dutch aircraft manufacturer, N.V.Fokker, Dr Mahathir said Malaysia will not go ahead with the plan if it is not allowed to study the company's financial position.

"If we cannot make due diligence, we will not buy ... we are not talking about 10 sen or one ringgit, it's millions.

"We have to be careful. We cannot spend the country's money just like that," he said.

Anwar had said yesterday that Malaysia is unable to pursue its interest to the salvage bankrupt aircraft manufacturer after the country was denied access to Fokker's accounts. -- BERNAMA

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