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Mahathir-Istana

MAHATHIR DENIES ANY ISTANA INTERFERENCE IN MB'S APPOINTMENT

BUTTERWORTH, April 22 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today denied any Istana interference in the appointment of the new Selangor Menteri Besar.

The question of Istana interference did not arise and the Sultan of Selangor did not say anything about the likely candidate for the post of Menteri Besar of the state.

"I don't know what the Sultan told the reporters but the Sultan did not inform me anything," he told a news conference at the RMAF Base here before leaving for Kuala Lumpur after a one-day visit to Penang.

Also present at the news conference were Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon.

Asked about the list of candidates, which he was supposed to have forwarded to the Sultan, he said: "There is no list, I do not have any list on the potential candidates for the post of Menteri Besar, I think you misheard (what the Sultan said)."

"He (Sultan) actually asked that the question of appointing a new Menteri Besar be resolved in about one or two weeks, hence we will wait for one or two weeks," he said.

On the criteria for a candidate to be Menteri Besar such as having a clean record as stressed by the Sultan of Selangor, the Prime Minister said: "he (Muhammad) was clean when appointed Menteri Besar and I am not accusing him of not being clean now but he has become involved in a scandal and hence we cannot tarnish the good name of Umno."

On the memorandum sent by a group of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) protesting the listing of the Bakun Hydro-Electric Corporation Bhd in the Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange, he said he was fed up with such groups who always tried to create issues out of nothing.

He said they had become tools of foreigners with vested interests because these groups emerged out of the blues to defend the environment but previously it was not known where they existed.

He said it was stupid and mad to allow oneself to become the tools of others.

NGOs could protest but they should be reasonable and not try to exaggerate, he said.

"They (West) need to look after their own backyard, they have chopped all their trees to build houses, built numerous hydro-electricity dams and so on to the extent of being devoid of trees," Dr Mahathir said.

A group of NGOs had sent a 40-page memorandum the Chairman of the Securities Commission Datuk Munir Majid protesting the listing of the company in the stock exchange claiming that the project was costly and a high risk venture with low returns.

A total of 75 local financial institutions and securities firms are expected to sign an agreement on May 13 to buy over the 375 million Bakun Hydro-Electric Corporation shares valued at RM750 million.

On the Election Court's decision to nullify the results of the Kemena seat in the last Sarawak election, the Prime Minister said he would have to study the decision first before making any comment. -- BERNAMA

SA AA AAM