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LEAD Mahathir-Jet

NEWLY-ORDERED JET BELONGS TO GOVT, SAYS DR M

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 12 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has denied buying a multi-million ringgit private jet for himself.

He said the jet would belong to the government.

"That is the government's (jet), not me, I don't have that kind of money," he told reporters after launching the Proton Perdana V6 and Satria GTi 1.8L models here today.

He was responding to questions by reporters on a statement issued by his former deputy Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim that he (Dr Mahathir) had ordered a RM200 million jet and that he himself designed the aircraft's interior decor.

Dr Mahathir said Anwar had also been using government executive jets and if he was in the government, he would be using the same jet.

He said the government was selling off the present jet and had to buy a new one as the former did not have sufficient range.

"We have been doing a lot of travelling," he said.

"He (Anwar) did a lot of travelling too and he used to borrow other people's jet. We don't like borrowing other people's jet, we would like to use our own jet," he said.

To a question, Dr Mahathir said he did not really know the cost of the new aircraft.

The decision to buy the jet was made three years ago and as such, it was not something new, he said, adding that "we decided at the time when he (Anwar) was the Minister of Finance and he approved it."

Anwar has been charged with 10 counts of corruption and sexual misconduct, all of which he has denied.

Anwar, who was dismissed from the government on Sept 2 and Umno the next day, is currently facing four charges of corrupt practice.

-- BERNAMA

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