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Dr M: Probe into Perwaja case on-going

INVESTIGATIONS into the alleged corruption involving the former management of Perwaja, the ailing steel-manufacturer is on-going. The case has yet to be produced in court due to the lack of evidence, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday.

"Although I believe that a thorough investigation into the alleged corruption in Perwaja has been carried out, it is not easy to collect adequate evidence to bring those responsible to court.

"At the moment, I have only obtained initial reports on the case," he told reporters in Kuala Lumpur yesterday after attending a one-hour briefing by the Anti-Corruption Agency (ACA).

He was asked to comment whether the ACA has briefed him on the latest developments pertaining to the alleged corruption involving Perwaja Steel. When asked if the Perwaja's case will not be brought to court due to lack in evidence, Dr Mahathir dismissed such a possibility.

Investigations, he said, are on-going to make sure there is enough evidence to ensure concrete conviction against those held responsible.

"You have to remember that we have to go to Hong Kong, Japan ... and it is not easy to ask other people. They are not obliged to answer us," he added.

Dr Mahathir, who is also the Home Minister, also acknowledged the increase in the number of corruption and graft cases in the country last year.

He described the situation as at "a serious level".

A total of 10,000 complaints on corruption were lodged last year but about 600 cases were investigated.

He added, however, the number of cases such as the "poison pen" letters had scaled down last year.

Malaysians, he said, should not take the matter lightly and try to eradicate all type of corruption and graft.

Earlier, before the briefing, Dr Mahathir launched the ACA's campaign to consolidate the integrity of Government's administrative management.

He reminded leaders and administrators that perpetrating graft against the have-nots is a form of social oppression, which if left unchecked, may build up public resentment against the establishment and subsequently undermine national stability.

"If the administration or its members collude with greedy traders or entrepreneurs, this will result in escalating operating and development costs.

"Eventually, it is the people who would have to bear these costs," he said.

Dr Mahathir also stressed on the importance of integrity and trustworthiness as part of good ethics in any management system.

For example, he said if an officer at the Treasury who is entrusted to collect revenue is untrustworthy, the nation's treasures or reserves will then be depleted.

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