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Singapore-Business Times

DOCUMENT VERIFIED BY SOURCES, SAID BT EDITOR

SINGAPORE, Jan 16 (Bernama) -- Singapore's Business Times (BT) said it had verified from its own sources a document cited in an article published by the newspaper of a purported secret meeting against sacked Malaysian Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim held last November.

The newspaper today carried the full text by Malaysia's Information Minister Datuk Seri Mohamed Rahmat refuting the article and that the so-called "leaked document" detailing the meeting was a "fabrication" that was posted on the Internet a month ago.

"We thank Information Minister Datuk Mohamed Rahmat for his statement and we are happy to run it in full.

"We wish to clarify, however, that the document cited in our article was not obtained from the Internet. We obtained it from our own sources and we did take steps to verify its authenticity.

"We published the story on the belief that it was accurate and we had no ill intentions," said BT editor Patrick Daniel in a footnote.

The Jan 13 article written by BT's regional analysis editor Yang Razali Kassim quoting an alleged "leaked document" from the purported secret meeting held at Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's residence on Nov 5.

The article said the meeting was to plot "Round Two" in the war against Anwar who was sacked as the country's number two and finance minister in September and Dr Mahathir allegedly admitted to making fundamental mistakes in handling the Anwar affair.

Apart from Mohamed, others named attending the meeting were Umno treasurer Tun Daim Zainuddin, Umno secretary-general Datuk Sabbaruddin Chik and several other Umno notable members, Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Thamby Chik, Tan Sri Sanusi Junid, Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz and Datuk Ibrahim Ali.

BT's sister newspaper, The Straits Times, has reported denials by Abdul Rahim and Ibrahim.

Mohamed said he categorically denied any such meeting took place and viewed the article as an ill-intentioned attempt to undermine both the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) government and Umno under Dr Mahathir's leadership.

"At a time when bilateral relations between Singapore and Malaysia are on the mend, such unprovoked and ill-intentioned articles by a respectable newspaper in the republic cannot be good for the healing process.

"I hope that it was pure bad journalism rather than any other agenda by the writer or the Singapore Business Times that result in this article and was reproduced in The New Paper," said Mohamed who is also BN secretary-general.

-- BERNAMA

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