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Mahathir-Anwar

GOVT TO CONSIDER SETTING UP AN INDEPENDENT COMMISSION

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 6 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Mahathir Mohamad said today that the government will consider suggestions by several quarters for the setting up of an independent commission to conduct investigations pertaining to injuries sustained by Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim while in police custody.

"If that is everybody's desire, we'll have to consider," he told reporters after presenting educational assistance and Hari Raya gifts to orphans in the Federal Territory, at the Tabung Haji building, here.

He was asked to comment on the statement yesterday by Attorney-General Tan Sri Mohtar Abdullah who holds the police fully responsible for injuries sustained by the former deputy prime minister while in detention.

Asked when the commission will be set up, Dr Mahathir said that he had not thought about it and would have to study the matter first.

Several quarters including the DAP, Gerakan and Parti Rakyat Malaysia (PRM) have called for the setting up of an independent commission to investigate allegations by Anwar that he was assaulted while in police custody following his arrest on Sept 20, last year.

Anwar was removed as deputy prime minister on Sept 2 and expelled from Umno the following day.

Dr Mahathir said that based on newspaper reports, the police investigation was not complete as statements had not yet been recorded from several people.

The police investigation was conducted by a special team headed by ACP Mat Zain Ibrahim.

"I read that the investigation is not complete...statements have yet to be recorded from several other people. Maybe they are officials higher than him," he said.

Mohtar has directed the special investigation team to complete its investigation by recording statements from nine senior police officers including Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Rahim Noor and his deputy, Tan Sri Norian Mai.

Dr Mahathir said that a deeper probe should be conducted.

"Well, the police have been generally blamed but we will have to find out in detail...surely we cannot blame the whole police force," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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