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Mahathir-Inquiry

EX-DPM INJURIES:GOVT TO PUBLICISE INQUIRY FINDINGS, SAYS MAHATHIR

LANGKAWI, Feb 2 (Bernama) -- The government will make public the findings of the independent commission of inquiry investigating injuries on former deputy prime minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim while in police custody last September, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

"What is the point of setting up the inquiry if the report is not to be made public," he said.

Dr Mahathir was responding to reporters' questions after attending a welcoming luncheon for the 1999 Le Tour de Langkawi cyclists at the Berjaya Beach and Spa Resort, here.

The commission should be given sufficient time to complete its inquiry although "we want it to be done as quickly as possible", he said.

The four-member commission is headed by former Chief Judge of Malaya Tan Sri Anuar Zainal Abidin.

Its other members are former Appeals Court Judge Datuk Mahadev Shankar, former Malaysian Medical Association (MMA) president and orthopaedic surgeon Datuk Dr Yeoh Poh Hong and former Attorney-General Tan Sri Abu Talib Othman.

When announcing the formation of the commission on Jan 27, Dr Mahathir said that with its establishment, police investigations into Anwar's injuries headed by Kuala Lumpur CID Chief SAC II Mat Zin Ibrahim would cease.

The commission would report to the Yang di-Pertuan Agong who also appointed its members.

On a news report quoting sources that the commission would complete its investigation within 14 days, Dr Mahathir said: "I don't know and I'm not aware of it."

He said the commission itself would decide on its terms of reference and the establishment of its secretariat.

Dr Mahathir also dismissed allegations by the opposition on the Internet questioning the credibility of two members of the commission -- Abu Talib and Dr Yeoh.

The opposition claimed that Abu Talib allegedly destroyed an evidence for a case involving former Dewan Rakyat Deputy Speaker D.P. Vijandran and that Dr Yeoh is working for Pantai Medical Centre which is owned by Dr Mahathir's son, Mokhzani.

"I did not appoint members of the commission and my son has got nothing to do with this," Dr Mahathir said.

"Is there any proof that Abu Talib has destroyed the evidence? Was he ever found guilty by the court for the allegation?" Dr Mahathir asked back.

Answering other questions, Dr Mahathir hoped that Le Tour de Langkawi organisers would aim for a better grading for the event now rated 2.4 from 2.5.

(The 2.4 rating means Malaysia can now attract more prominent cycling groups. The world's number one circuit, the Tour de France is rated 2.0)

Dr Mahathir said as an impact of the race, the fourth series since 1996, Malaysia now enjoyed greater prominence among cyclists world-wide.

Malaysia, he said, has now become a manufacturer of sophisticated bicycles used for mountains and rough terrain.

The race had helped expose local riders to world standard and enabled Malaysia win for the first time a cycling medal during last year's

Commonwealth Games in Kuala Lumpur.

Tourist arrivals from Europe had also increased due to the world exposure Langkawi enjoyed through the event.

Addressing the participants and officials during the luncheon, Dr Mahathir expressed hope that they would take time to enjoy Malaysia's greenery which he said " is not as bad as it has been portrayed".

A total of 150 riders from 25 teams are taking part in the 1,773.5 km race over 12 days for the RM1.5 million in prize money at stake.

-- BERNAMA

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