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Mahathir-Commission

MAHATHIR ANNOUNCES COMMISSION TO PROBE ANWAR'S 'BLACK EYE'

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 27 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said that the government has decided to establish a commission of inquiry to probe injuries suffered by Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim while in police custody.

"The government has decided to set up a commission of inquiry into the cause of the 'black eye' of Datuk Seri Anwar," he told a news conference to explain matters regarding toll collection.

Dr Mahathir said the three-member commission would comprise former Chief Justice of Malaya Tan Sri Anuar Zainal Abidin, Appeal Court judge Datuk Mahadev Shankar and an unnamed orthopaedic surgeon.

Former Attorney-General Tan Sri Abu Talib Othman would conduct the inquiry, he said.

To a question, he said the team was expected to come up with their report as soon as possible.

Anwar, who was former deputy prime minister and former finance minister, is charged in court with using his position to direct former Special Branch director Datuk Mohd Said Awang and his deputy, Datuk Amir Junus to get retractions from two persons regarding sex allegations against him.

Anwar caused a stir when he appeared in court to face charges on Sept 29 last year with a bruised left eye, igniting calls for the government to set up a special independent body to investigate.

Attorney-General Tan Sri Mohtar Abdullah in a statement on Jan 5 this year said police were responsible for injuries on certain parts of Anwar's body sustained while he was under police custody.

Mohtar also directed a special police investigation team to record statements from top-brass police officers including former Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Noor who resigned on Jan 7 to assume full responsibility for Anwar's injuries.

Anwar, was sacked from the government on Sept 3 last year and from Umno a day later, and detained under the Internal Security Act by the police on Sept 20 after he led his supporters in an illegal gathering.

DAP Secretary-General Lim Kit Siang in a statement said the commission should conduct all its proceedings and hearings in public.

He said the commission should not only hear from the police high command, including former Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Rahim Noor, Deputy Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Norian Mai, the four directors of Special Branch, Internal Security and Public Order, Management and Criminal Investigation Department but also the Prime Minister.

"The more-than-four-month delay in establishing a commission of inquiry into Anwar's 'black eye' had been an injustice not only to Anwar but also to the international reputation of the country," he said.

Whether the establishment of the commission could help to restore public confidence would depend on the terms of reference and powers vested in the commission, Lim added.

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