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PM to study call for independent inquiry

Ashraf Abdullah; Jumaaton Azmi

KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said tonight the Government would consider suggestions by several quarters for the setting up an independent inquiry to investigate the alleged police assault on Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He said if this was what everyone wanted, he would consider it.

"I will have to study it. I have not thought about it," he told reporters after breaking fast with 381 orphans from the Federal Territory Muslim Orphans' Welfare Association.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Home Minister, said the police investigation was not conclusive probably because a lower ranking officer, who carried out the investigation, was not in a position to record statements from higher-ranking officers.

He was asked to comment on statements by various political parties and non-governmental organisations urging the Government to set up an independent inquiry to ensure that a thorough and fair investigation was carried out to punish those responsible for the crime.

Attorney-General Tan Sri Mohtar Abdullah said yesterday that police officers had caused some of the injuries suffered by Anwar while he was in their custody.

He ordered the Special Investigation Team, headed by Assistant Commissioner Mat Zain Ibrahim, to interview nine senior officers, including the Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Noor and his deputy Tan Sri Norian Mai.

Mohtar also instructed the special team to record statements from the doctors whose reports contained some inconsistencies on several important aspects.

Dr Mahathir said although the police had been generally blamed for the injuries on Anwar, the whole police force should not be held responsible.

"We have to know everything in detail," he said.

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