

03/02/1999

PM: Findings to be made public (HL)

Saiful Azhar Abdullah; K. Bala

LANGKAWI, Tues. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that the findings of the independent commission of inquiry formed to investigate the alleged police assault on Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, would be made public.

He said it would be pointless having an inquiry if its outcome was not made public.

Dr Mahathir was replying to questions from reporters after attending a luncheon at the Berjaya Beach and Spa Resort to welcome competitors and officials to the Le Tour de Langkawi cycle race which starts tomorrow.

Asked when the inquiry would start, Dr Mahathir said the commission members, who were only recently appointed, would need time to get their letters of appointment, work out their terms of reference and set up a secretariat.

"Anyway we want the commission to complete the inquiry fast but they still need time," said Dr Mahathir, adding that the commission would report its findings to the Yang di-Pertuan Agong.

On reports that the commission had been given 14 days to complete the job, Dr Mahathir said as far as he knew the commission would be given sufficient time "and we want them to finish the work as quickly as possible".

Dr Mahathir had announced the setting up of the commission of inquiry, to be headed by former Chief Judge of Malaya Tan Sri Anuar Zainal Abidin, on Jan 27.

The other members of the commission are former Court of Appeal Judge Datuk Mahadev Shankar; Pantai Medical Centre consultant orthopaedic surgeon Datuk Dr Yeoh Poh Hong; and former Attorney-General Tan Sri Abu Talib Othman who will lead the investigation.

The Prime Minister was taken aback when told that certain quarters were unhappy over the appointments of Abu Talib and Dr Yeoh. Aliran had said that it was against the appointment of Abu Talib as he was allegedly involved in the destruction of D.P. Vijandran's videotapes and photographs.

Abu Talib, had, on Jan 10 1990, told the Press that video tapes, photographs and negatives allegedly featuring pornographic scenes which were stolen from Vijandran's safe, had been destroyed with the latter's permission after he had found there was no case to proceed with.

DAP secretary-general Lim Kit Siang had said the appointment of Dr Yeoh would affect the credibility of the commission as he was working for Pantai Medical Centre which is in the stable of companies owned by Dr Mahathir's son.

Reacting to Aliran's comment, Dr Mahathir said: "I am not aware about that but I don't think he is involved in destroying the evidence.

"Was he (Abu Talib) found guilty of destroying evidence? He should be charged if it is true but this is just the same kind of suspicion thrown at a person without any basis.

"You can't penalise people on that basis ... it is not something that is proven, it is just hearsay.

"Such things should not be taken into consideration. I think he is quite independent, he will do ... he is very knowledgeable ... he is not the only one, there are two judges."

On Dr Yeoh, the Prime Minister asked the reporter: "I don't know about

this doctor. Why? What's wrong with him? Did he remove somebody's bone? Did he hit somebody's bone? He is an orthopaedic surgeon."

When told that the Opposition had said it was because Dr Yeoh was working with Pantai Medical Centre which was linked to his son, Dr Mahathir expressed shock and said: "You mean my son tells the doctor what to diagnose? This is the kind of thing that they try to bring up in order to discredit every body else.

"My son has nothing to do with this. I didn't even know who he (Dr Yeoh) was and, in any case, I was not the one who suggested his name."

The commission was set up following revelation by Attorney-General Tan Sri Mohtar Abdullah on Jan 5 that police officers had caused some of the injuries suffered by Anwar when he was in their custody.

Various political parties and non-governmental organisations had then urged 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.

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