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`Show me proof that I tried to cover up'

Zubaidah Abu Bakar; Sharanjit Singh

ALOR STAR, Mon. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said his former deputy should show proof that he (the Prime Minister) had attempted to cover up corruption investigations involving a Minister. Commenting on allegations that he was not addressing the contents of a police report lodged by former Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, Dr Mahathir said: "That is his allegations ... he must show the proof.

"What is the proof that I prevented action (against the Minister), how did I prevent, what did I do to prevent," he said when asked if he had prevented action from being taken against International Trade and Industry Minister Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz for alleged corruption.

Dr Mahathir said this in response to a question on allegations by Anwar's former political secretary Mohd Ezam Mohd Noor that he (Dr Mahathir) was not answering to the contents of Anwar's police reports but was diverting people's attention to other issues.

Anwar had lodged a police report against Dr Mahathir last month alleging that the Prime Minister prevented the Attorney-General from prosecuting Rafidah for corruption.

Asked if his response meant he was denying the allegations, Dr Mahathir said: "I am not denying anything ... ask him to show (proof) first, I know what to say. He said I prevented (action from being taken), show how I did this. Did I put a kayu galang (barricade) or what?"

On whether the authorities would heed calls to investigate the reports, Dr Mahathir said: "Which one? Ask him to give and we can investigate. We have to investigate if the documents are genuine ... sometimes it could be forged. They can do many things ... they can take Government documents and type anything."

Dr Mahathir also said Anwar could have taken documents, including investigation papers he was not allowed to, when he was in office.

Dr Mahathir said he had never taken any investigation papers when he was Home Minister but Anwar could have done so to blackmail others when he became Prime Minister.

"He used to call the police, Anti Corruption Agency and many other officers when he was in office.

"He did this although it was not his right to do so ... the officers could have reported to him about certain accusations ... they could have given him documents. After all he was holding a very high post."

On reports quoting the Kelantan Menteri Besar's Press secretary Wan Ismail Wan Jusoh as saying the people of the state no longer held the Kelantan royal family in high regard, Dr Mahathir said: "It is not the Kelantan people but only fanatical Pas members.

"I think the Kelantan people, including Pas supporters, respect the Royal family," he said, adding that Pas leaders seemed to have gone crazy in their quest for power until they were willing to condemn the palace.

Dr Mahathir said it was against the law to condemn Malay Rulers and Wan Ismail's statement would be investigated upon and action would be taken.

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