

Dr M: Why didn't Anwar stop 'Project IC'?

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By Billy Boey

Former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad today deflected claims that he lied under oath about his ignorance of 'Project IC' and urged his critics to instead question Anwar Ibrahim's silence about the matter when he was in government.

Without naming Anwar, Mahathir said "a Pakatan Rakyat leader" who served as his deputy prime minister had never questioned him about 'Project IC', allegedly a clandestine scheme to issue citizenship to Muslim migrants in Sabah to alter the state's voter demographics.

Speaking to reporters after a function in Kuala Lumpur today, Mahathir said that if 'Project IC' really took place during his tenure as prime minister, Anwar could have stopped him.

"He was in the government, he knew the government's policy. If that was the government's policy, why didn't he stop it?" he asked reporters after attending the 30th anniversary luncheon of the Japanese Chambers of Trade and Industry Malaysia (Jactim).

Asked whether he was referring to Anwar, Mahathir jokingly said "maybe".

Mahathir in his testimony before the royal commission of inquiry (RCI) into Sabah's illegal immigrants yesterday said he was not aware of 'Project IC' and that overzealous civil servants were to blame for issuing citizenship documents to those not qualified.

Dr M's aides fingered

In earlier testimonies, two of Mahathir's closest aides - Abdul Aziz Shamsudin and Megat Junid Megat Ayub - were accused by former civil servants having a role in 'Project IC'.

Aziz Shamsudin was accused of hosting several National Registration Department staff at his home in Kuala Lumpur during the early 1990s for the purpose processing citizenship documents.

NONEFormer Sabah NRD director Ramli Kamaruddin also testified that Megat Junid, the then deputy home minister, had directed him to process documents that would

allow a group of people to vote.

Ramli testified that the instruction came two weeks before the 1994 Sabah state legislative assembly election and was intended to ensure that the party endorsed by the federal government would win.

In turn, Mahathir testified that there was no government policy to grant citizenship for those who were not qualified in Sabah and if it was done, then "government officers" were to blame.

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