

'Malaysian Maverick' insults gov't leaders, Malay rulers
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The Home Ministry is mulling on whether to ban the book titled 'Malaysian Maverick: Mahathir Mohamad in Turbulent Times', the Dewan Rakyat was told today.

"If it is found that the book does not go against the Printing Presses and Publications Act 1984, there is no reason for the government to prevent the book to be allowed into the country," said Home Minister Hishammuddin Hussein.

NONEHe said this in a written reply to a question by Liew Chin Tong (DAP-Bukit Bendera) who wanted to know why the book was not allowed to be sold in the country since Nov 2009.

Hishammuddin clarified that the book was found to have insulted the national leadership and the institution of Malay rulers.

A total of 800 copies of the book were confiscated in Port Klang last November.

After the initial period of 60 days expired, the Home Ministry on Jan 28 decided to extend its investigation of the book by another two months.

It appeared that the Home Ministry has again extended its investigation a second time late last month.

RM100 bil squandered

The book by Barry Wain, a former Asian Wall Street Journal editor, claims to be a definitive account of Mahathir's years in power and offers a critical study of his policies.

Among others, the book claims that Mahathir squandered RM100 billion on financial scandals during his 22-year tenure as premier.

"Based on incomplete public information, RM15 billion was a conservative estimate of Perwaja's losses. Similarly, Bank Bumiputra dropped at least RM10 billion. Bank Negara's foreign exchange forays drained perhaps RM23 billion from Malaysia's reserves. The cost of trying to push up the price of tin seemed paltry by comparison, maybe RM1 billion," said Wain.

"The total, RM50 billion or so, could have easily doubled if a professional accounting has been made, factoring in all the invisibles, from unrecorded writeoffs to blatant embezzlement and opportunity costs."

Wain also claims that the Putra World Trade Centre - Umno's headquarters - were funded by taxpayers after the party's loans were written off from a government owned bank.

Mahathir had denied allegations about PWTC and threatened to sue the Wain over the his claims of financial impropriety.

