

Dr M challenges gov't to charge him
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Former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad today challenged the government to charge him for his alleged involvement in a judge-fixing scandal during his rule.
MCPX

The government yesterday released a report that found evidence of an "insidious" conspiracy to influence the appointment of judges and had listed Mahathir, along with other top figures, as being involved.

Following the release of the report, Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's cabinet agreed for the Attorney-General's Chambers to immediately investigate the allegations against those identified in the report, including Mahathir.

mahathir and vk lingam tape royal commission hearing "I welcome it," the 82-year-old influential leader said at a meeting in Johor.

"I want them to charge me in court. Only then will I have the opportunity to expose more conflicts faced by the judges, including those who have implicated me," he told reporters.

The report was prepared by a royal commission that investigated a video clip allegedly showing top lawyer VK Lingam brokering judge appointments.

Insidious movement

"We are of the view that there was, conceivably, an insidious movement by (Lingam) with the covert assistance of his close friends," it said, citing business tycoon Vincent Tan - Mahathir's close associate - and secretary-general of the ruling Umno, Tengku Adnan.

"In the process, Tun Mahathir Mohamad was also entangled," the report said, referring to the man who ruled Malaysia with an iron fist for 22 years.

The report said there was "sufficient cause" to invoke laws including those on sedition and corruption against "some of the principal individuals involved." But it did not specify who should face prosecution.

During the commission inquiry, Mahathir testified that he was not influenced by his associates when he selected judges.

His arch foe and former deputy premier, Anwar Ibrahim, unleashed a furore last year by releasing the clip, which apparently showed Lingam telling a person identified as former chief justice Ahmad Fairuz that that he would put him forward for a top job.