

Dr M's dare - set up three royal panels
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In a tit-for-tat move, Dr Mahathir Mohamad has dared the government to set up three royal commissions to probe alleged irregularities linked to Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi. MCPX

In his blog post today, Mahathir said the panels of inquiry should investigate Abdullah's role in the:

- 'Oil for Food' scandal
- merger between ECM-Libra and Avenue Assets
- spending of wang ehsan (goodwill payment) in Terengganu

vk lingam scandal mahathir eusoff chin adnan fairuz vincent lingamThe former premier's ire stems from the report of the 'Lingam tape' royal panel, which had named him as one of six prominent personalities who warrant further investigation for allegedly compromising judicial integrity.

Mahathir highlighted several words from the commission's report and used these in turn to lace his barbs with sarcasm.

He wrote that the three panels he has proposed would not need to "ascertain anything with exactitude".

"Mere possibilities should suffice for (them) to make their recommendations and for full publicity and pictures to be released to the Kalimullah (Hassan) controlled mainstream media," he said.

"A full investigation by the authorities should then be carried and the innocence proven though not necessarily beyond reasonable doubt."

At the start of the blog-post, Mahathir noted that the royal commission is not a court of law and is not supposed to judge and sentence people.

"But the fact that such commissions are often manned by judges or ex-judges seems to indicate that principles of justice and determination of right and wrong should be based on legal principles," he wrote.

"Clearly the royal commission on the Lingam tape has allowed itself the liberty of stretching legal principles in order possibly to achieve a certain objective."

lingam tape 160508 reportHe quoted a "telling" sentence from the report, emphasising certain words: In the process, Dr Mahathir Mohamad was also entangled. That possibility was ominous when examined against the factual circumstances surrounding the rejection of Malek Ahmad as Chief Judge of Malaya.

'Their ultimate aim or purpose could not be ascertained with exactitude given the limitation under the (Commission) terms of reference. It could be related to the fixing of cases as

submitted by counsel for the Bar and others. Certainly it is reasonable to suggest that it could not be anything but self-serving.

Mahathir said that, through this unusual reasoning "even though they could not ascertain with exactitude, the commission concluded that I could be related to the fixing of cases...I await the investigation which I suspect is possibly intended to incriminate me one way or another".

"Indeed based on the arguments of the commission itself I can say that possibly it was set up in order to find something to pin on me, to drag me to court etc and generally humiliate me.

"Indeed, although I cannot ascertain with exactitude, it may be possible that the commission members may have been instructed to pin something on me. This is a reasonable suggestion given that for the prime minister, 'it would be self-serving'."

Abdullah's role questioned

Expanding on his chosen themes of inquiry, Mahathir said one panel should look into the possibilities of lobbying and abuse of position by Abdullah while he was deputy premier, "as is recorded by the United Nations in which he was listed for being involved in the Oil for Food business with Iraq".

abdullah ahmad badawi and oil for food" He is also on record as abusing his position by lobbying the Iraqi authorities in favour of his sister-in-law. Ministers, deputy prime ministers and prime ministers are prohibited from doing business. Letters of recommendation for sisters-in-law clearly constitute lobbying," commented Mahathir.

The second panel, he said, should investigate the merger between ECM-Libra - at that time partly owned by Abdullah's son-in-law Khairy Jamaluddin "and a well-known crony" - with the government-linked company Avenue Assets.

Abdullah, who is also finance minister, "was possibly responsible for devaluing the price of Avenue Assets and giving ECM-Libra the management role", said Mahathir.

monsoon cup terengganu He also questioned the substantial allocation of federal funds to Terengganu for various projects such as the Monsoon Cup and the construction of the Crystal Mosque, even though the state had some RM6 billion in unspent wang ehsan.

As such, he said, the third royal commission should look into how the 5 percent oil royalty (known as wang ehsan or goodwill payment) due to Terengganu was spent.

"It is possible that the usual procedures for fund allocation and spending were not adhered to. The possibility of corruption when contracts were given should be fully investigated. The commission can, on the basis of possibility implicate the prime minister, the menteri besar of Terengganu and Khairy in the misuse and abuse of authority."

Mahathir said that mere denial by the prime minister, the (former) menteri besar and the contractor "should not be accepted as it is reasonable to suggest that they could not be anything but self-serving".

"The possibility here is ominous. When the royal commissions have finished their work, new

royal commissions should be set up to look into other possibilities of abuses of power by the present government and all the previous governments," he added.

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