

Show us the proof, Najib tells Dr M

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KUALA LUMPUR: Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak yesterday asked Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad to show proof to back his allegation that Malaysia had offered land and airspace to Singapore.

He said although the issue is academic now as the government has decided not to go ahead with the bridge to replace the causeway, the government is willing to look at the former prime minister's proof.

To a question from a reporter, Najib said he does not know whether the evidence that Mahathir claims he has is classified under the Official Secrets Act unless it is revealed and assessed.

"But if he is afraid to reveal it (publicly), he can submit proof to us first, we can see what he has," he said.

Najib was speaking to reporters after opening the 58th special general meeting of the Peninsular Malay Students

Confederation (GPMS).

He was asked to comment on Mahathir's statement in a ceremony during the Petaling Jaya Utara Umno Youth annual meeting on Saturday that he was willing to swear by the Quran to lend credence to his arguments. To this, Najib reiterated the government's stand that the issue of stand and airspace was blough up by Singapore "as a balance of interest for the construction of the straight bridge".

On Mahathir's statement on Sunday that he will "stop talking" if the government decides to build the bridge, Najib said the cabinet has already made the decision not to go on with the project.

"It is not that we want to cancel it but it was due to the complicated matter, especially in forms of international laws and the water agreement with Singapore," he said.

On the move by the PJ Utara Umno division to invite Mahathir as a guest at its meeting, Najib said the party headquarters has yet to decide

on the matter.

According to an Umno Supreme Council directive, only supreme council members Umno ministers and mentris besar are allowed to open divisional meetings.

"Tun is still an Umno member and we take into consideration the fact the meeting was organised by Umno members. However, we will monitor the development. It is up to the disciplinary board," he said.

Asked whether the government is doing anything to stop Mahathir's criticisms which are confusing the public, he said the government will continue to explain the issues raised.

"We cannot guarantee this (when he will stop) because we do not know what we should do to end it. We do not know what Tun actually wants in this matter," he said.

On GPMS, Najib suggested the new leadership tackle issues like the dropout rate among Malays, the imbalance between male and female university students and the unemployment among Malay graduates.