

Dr M says he did not seek aid

ALLEGATIONS: Former PM wants proof he wrote to the World Bank during financial crisis

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TUN Dr Mahathir Mohamad has called on de facto opposition leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim to show proof that he had secretly written to the World Bank asking for aid during the 1997 to 1998 financial crisis.

The former prime minister asked Anwar, who was the finance minister in 1997, to show the letter purportedly written by him (Dr Mahathir).

"I ask that he show the letter, if there is any. I was the one who rejected the World Bank," Dr Mahathir said.

"The World Bank was persistent and they wanted to give (aid) to us. We said no. If we had accepted, we would have become slaves to those who helped us."

Dr Mahathir was speaking at a press conference after addressing an *ummah* gathering at SMK Agama Al-Irshad here yesterday.

Present were Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Tan Sri Nor Mohamed Yakcop and Penang Malays Association (Pemenang) president Datuk

Seri Mohd Yusoff Latiff.

Nor Mohamed said he had seen Dr Mahathir telling several World Bank officers, who were persistent that the country take the financial aid, to get out of his room.

It was reported that Anwar, during a speech at a dinner to discuss the Economic Transformation Programme organised by the Selangor government, had claimed that Dr Mahathir had written to the World Bank seeking aid during the financial crisis.

Earlier in his speech at the gathering, Dr Mahathir said differences among Muslims occurred due to differences in political understanding, and because of that, Muslims were divided and became enemies.

He expressed sadness the politics was dividing the Muslims, noting that there was no such thing during the colonial days.

"Today, the disunity among Muslims because of political beliefs is so deep that we cannot cross the bridge to unite ourselves with other Muslim brethren.

"Yes, we have different political understanding, but this should not divide us."



Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad meeting guests at an *ummah* gathering in Tasek Gelugor yesterday. With him is Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Tan Sri Nor Mohamed Yakcop (right).

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