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Mahathir warns ministers and Bank Negara

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PETALING JAYA: Former premier Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad warned Bank Negara Malaysia yesterday that it could be found guilty of trying to conceal iMalaysia Development Bhd's (iMDB) "lies".

Commenting on Bank Negara's refusal to provide information on the report from the Monetary Authority of Singapore (MAS), Mahathir wrote in his blog chedet.cc: "If it is found to be protecting lies about iMDB's money that is said to be in Singapore, then this is also a crime under the country's laws".

On Tuesday, Bank Negara governor Tan Sri Zeti Akhtar Aziz said it had received information from MAS about iMDB's account in BSI Bank, but refused to divulge details, citing confidentiality.

Mahathir also said ministers who reply to

questions raised in Parliament are those responsible for their answers as they are the ones who do the final checks to ensure replies are accurate.

He said although the replies may have been prepared by their officers, the final responsibility lies with the ministers.

"He is the one who should bear the burden if there are errors. Though Parliament proceedings are protected by absolute privilege, if the replies are wrongly provided by the officers, they can be charged with intentionally trying to protect the minister concerned by withholding the truth."

He pointed out that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Abdul Razak had said US\$1 billion was not repatriated to Malaysia because Bank Negara would interfere with any

transaction of more than RM50 million.

"As far as I know, banks have been instructed to question any transaction above RM50,000. If the transaction has nothing to do with money laundering, there should not be a problem.

"The question here is why is iMDB involved in money laundering to the extent that money from the Cayman Islands had to be kept in Singapore," he asked.

He said Singapore had also checked in detail money going in or out of any country to ensure there is no money laundering.

"Does iMDB not know of MAS' regulations? What is the real reason for lying with regard to the money deposited in Singapore when in truth there was no money there, meaning more than US\$1 billion had

gone missing," he said.

He said if it cannot be proven that the money was in Singapore, then the officers and ministers concerned are guilty of lying.

"What is strange and wrong here is the reluctance of the responsible departments to take actions based on the allegations and police reports on the missing iMDB money.

"Instead, those who lodged reports have had their homes ransacked and investigated as if they were involved in acts of terrorism and money laundering.

"Reporters have been detained as though they have committed crimes under the Sedition Act and later released because they committed no wrong," he added.

He said even he had his clinic ransacked by the Inland Revenue Board.