

RCI set up to probe judge's claims

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Cabinet gives green light to commission, terms of reference to be decided later

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KUALA LUMPUR: A week after judicial misconduct claims by a senior judge exposing purported scams between certain top judges and private litigants to cheat the government, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad announced the setting up of a Royal Commission of Inquiry (RCI).

The Prime Minister said the Cabinet, during its weekly meeting on Wednesday, agreed to the formation of the RCI to investigate the allegations.

"We are setting up the RCI and it's up to them to look into the allegations made by the judge," Dr Mahathir told the media during an official visit to the Defence Ministry here yesterday.

Asked about the terms of reference of the RCI, Dr Mahathir said that matter had yet to be decided.

"We will set up the RCI and the terms will be determined later," he added.

On Feb 14, Court of Appeal judge Datuk Dr Hamid Sultan Abu Backer had filed a 65-page affidavit in court in support of an application by the late Karpal Singh's daughter, Sang-eet Singh Deo, to declare that the Chief Justice had failed to defend the integrity of the judiciary in two cases.

Hamid Sultan claimed that the scam was carried out by nominees of politicians getting into contracts



Warm welcome: Dr Mahathir being greeted by top Defence Ministry officials during his visit to the ministry in Kuala Lumpur as minister Mohamad Sabu (left) looks on.

with the government.

Once the government pulled out of a deal, the private parties would take the government to court to claim compensation.

Hamid Sultan had also alleged that these private parties created contracts with the government to defraud public funds, and that the

Apex court was perceived to be sympathetic to them.

Various parties have called for an RCI to probe the complaints against the judiciary.

Among them are the Malaysian Bar, which called for the government to establish the RCI and for its scope to cover all allegations made.

The Society for the Promotion of Human Rights (Proham) also joined the call for an RCI and said the commission should investigate the criminal nature of the allegations and propose action against the wrongdoers.

Earlier, during a dialogue with the Armed Forces personnel, Dr

Mahathir reiterated that the size of the civil service was bloated and could be reduced with the use of technology.

However, he was quick to say that such a move could cause other problems.

"When I resigned (in 2003), there were one million civil servants; now, it has gone up to 1.7 million.

"There are also off-the-budget entities whose staff are paid by the government.

"But if we reduce the size, there could be unemployment issues and this can cause social problems," he added.

He said the country should focus on manufacturing industries as this could help generate revenue and help people move from working with the civil sector to the private sector.

Dr Mahathir also said the world today faces different forms of challenges in this era of globalisation.

"It used to be focused on guerilla warfare, but now it's about threats such as terrorism and trade war.

"As such, the Defence Ministry has a big responsibility to look at these developments and its impact and help the government make suitable diplomatic decisions," said Dr Mahathir, who was the Defence Minister from 1981 to 1986.

Watch the video
thstartv.com

