

Mahathir demands Anwar produce alleged letter to World Bank
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BUTTERWORTH, Dec 17 — Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamed today issued a challenge to Opposition leader, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim over a purported letter that the former had written to the World Bank to appeal for funds during the financial crisis in 1999.

Tun Dr Mahathir (picture) alleged the accusation as false as he did not write such letter as claimed by Anwar. The former prime minister stressed that he had refused any help offered by the World Bank as this would render Malaysia a 'slave' to the world body, according to the Bernama Online report today.

The former prime minister challenged Anwar to swear on the Qur'an and assured the press present that he was prepared to do the same.

Tun Dr Mahathir, indicated that Datuk Seri Anwar had been in favour of measures recommended by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) during the financial crisis that would prove detrimental to the country's financial situation. Mahathir added that his former deputy's judgment was 'clouded' at that time.

The former prime minister's statements were supported by Tan Sri Nor Mohamed Yakcop who was one of Tun Mahathir's financial advisors at the time of the crisis. Tan Sri Nor recalled the advise provided by the World Bank representative who was summoned by the former prime minister.

According to Nor Mohamed, the World Bank had advocated for an increase in the housing loan interest rates, a restriction on the government's spending, and a withdrawal of all loans by Bank Negara to avoid economic crisis.

The recommendations were rejected by Tun Mahathir as the consequences would cause 'bloodshed on the streets'. The former prime minister had subsequently requested for the World Bank representative to leave his office.

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