

PKR: NEAC chaired by Dr M sought World Bank aid
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By Shannon Teoh

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 21 — PKR insisted today Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad had asked for World Bank loans, as the then prime minister had chaired the National Economic Action Council (NEAC) that made the requests.

The former prime minister said yesterday Malaysia had taken World Bank loans from 1958 to 1999, but that he never personally asked for such funds.

Today, PKR strategic director Rafizi Ramli made available documents purportedly from the World Bank, and pointed out that funds were disbursed for the July 1998 National Economic Recovery Plan (NERP), which was drawn up by the NEAC.

“It is clearly proven the request for financial aid from the World Bank was made by the NEAC, on behalf of the Malaysian government, to pay for the NERP that was launched in July 1998. The NEAC was fully controlled by Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad,” he said in an attached statement.

He added the documents showed the negotiation process began in February 1, 1999, “after Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim was jailed” on charges of corruption.

Anwar was found guilty and sentenced to six years’ jail on April 14, 1999, seven months after being sacked from the government by Dr Mahathir.

Rafizi also claimed that loans worth US\$404 million (or RM1.5 billion at the exchange rate then) in total were requested under Dr Mahathir’s orders.

Dr Mahathir has been locked in a verbal war over the past week with his then deputy Anwar and PKR leaders over their respective roles and actions during the 1997 Asian Financial Crisis.

The former Umno president, who is still influential in the party, issued a challenge last week to Opposition Leader Anwar over allegations of a purported letter that the former had written to the World Bank to appeal for funds during the financial crisis.

PKR has since produced World Bank records showing that Dr Mahathir’s administration had accepted financial aid numerous times from May 18, 1982 to Malaysia’s post-financial crisis period of March 30, 1999.

This includes three loans for projects inked six months after Anwar was sacked as deputy prime minister in September 1998.

Yesterday, Dr Mahathir said the last negotiation for loans was in 1997, but the funds were not disbursed until 1999.

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