

Dr Mahathir to testify before RCI today
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Security at the Kota Kinabalu High Court has been tightened as the country's longest-serving Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad (pic) is set to testify before the Royal Commission of Inquiry (RCI) today.

He would be the 209th and most distinguished witness to testify before the RCI.

Police sources disclosed that Dr Mahathir arrived at the Kota Kinabalu International Airport at 5pm yesterday evening.

Police were thorough in their screening of everyone entering the courthouse, including scanning with a metal detector for the first time.

The former premier's name has figured prominently during the course of the RCI hearings so far.

The RCI, which began in September last year, has heard the testimonies of numerous witnesses, including former senator Dr Chong Eng Leong, former Sandakan district chief officer Hassnar Ebrahim, politician Datuk Dr Jeffrey Kitingan and former Sabah Chief Minister Datuk Seri Yong Teck Lee.

The panel had heard claims and allegations about how clandestine meetings were held with top government officials, including the late deputy Home Minister Tan Sri Megat Junid Megat Ayob, to strengthen the rights of Malays in Sabah by altering the state's demographics.

In August last year, Dr Mahathir said that there was no need for the RCI to be established as these illegal immigrants were within their rights to ask for Malaysian citizenship. He expressed hope that there would not be any action taken to drive these immigrants out of the country.

"The RCI is unnecessary, the government will land in hot water when the commission finally discloses its findings," Dr Mahathir was reported to have said during a press conference last year. He claimed whatever the findings of the commission, the opposition would either claim that the facts had been twisted or the government would be blamed.

The country's longest serving prime minister said he had been accused of bringing the illegal immigrants into Malaysia, whereas there was no need as they knew how to enter Malaysia on their own.

He suggested perhaps these illegal immigrants flocked to Malaysia because it was a safe country, and even compared the situation to the Chinese and Indian immigrants who were given citizenship as part of the independence agreement with the British.

There are also rumours that former deputy prime minister and current opposition leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim will take to the witness stand next week, when the RCI draws to a close. However, this has yet to be confirmed. - September 11, 2013.

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