

## **See-To: Najib Not Party To Decisions On Toll When Dr M Was PM**

**MALAYSIA TODAY**

**Feb 26, 2018**

**By MT Webmaster**

(FMT) – The BN strategic communications (BNSC) team today claimed that when Dr Mahathir Mohamad was the prime minister, not all concession agreements awarded by the government were discussed in the cabinet.

Replying to allegations that Prime Minister Najib Razak had not done anything about purportedly lopsided toll concessions when he was a minister in Mahathir's cabinet, BNSC deputy director Eric See-To said toll concession agreements were typically negotiated under the Economic Planning Unit (EPU).

See-To said EPU reported directly to the prime minister with inputs from the finance ministry.

“While it was true that Najib has been a cabinet minister since the 1980s, after Mahathir appointed him minister of culture, youth and sports in 1986 and later on as education minister and then defence minister, he was never in the finance ministry, works ministry or made the EPU minister the entire time that Mahathir was prime minister,” he said in a statement.

He cited as an example a 20-year gaming concession for sports betting which was given out without tender by the finance ministry in June 2003 — just four months before Mahathir retired on Oct 31, 2003.

“The finance minister and the prime minister at that time was Mahathir himself.

“Thus, this exclusive licence was quietly awarded by Mahathir to one of his closest associates at a bargain price of RM25 million without the knowledge of the cabinet,” See-To said.

He said at that time, Malaysian gaming industry executives had estimated that such a lucrative sports-betting operation, offering wagers on events such as local and foreign

soccer matches and horse racing, could generate an annual revenue of about RM1 billion.

“The Wall Street Journal (WSJ) had reported about this several times at that time and had said that Mahathir’s successor, Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, and his cabinet only learned that such a licence was awarded the next year after Mahathir had retired.”

Earlier today, former New Straits Times group editor Mustapha Kamil Mohd Janor had questioned in a Facebook post Najib’s sudden commitment to abolish tolls, pointing out that he had not expressed such a stance when the concessions were signed.

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Sources: <https://www.malaysia-today.net/2018/02/26/see-to-najib-not-party-to-decisions-on-toll-when-dr-m-was-pm/>