

Dr Mahathir unaware of reports on Vincent Tan's involvement in ECRL

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PETALING JAYA, June 25 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said he has no knowledge of reports relating to the involvement of tycoon Tan Sri Vincent Tan and T7 Global Bhd in the East Coast Rail Link (ECRL) project.

"I don't know about that. I can't comment. You should ask Vincent Tan," he said in a press conference today when asked to comment on whether the government would reconsider continuing the ECRL project because of Tan's involvement.

Dr Mahathir said he was alright with the idea to build the railway but stressed that the cost should be reduced and that was why the government was renegotiating with the Chinese government on that matter.

He said the current terms undertaken by the previous government were not good for Malaysia which among others entailed that the money should be paid regardless of the construction progress.

"All these terms need to be renegotiated, and if we get better terms, of course we will continue but we hope to reduce costs a lot because of a lot of wrong things being done.

"Example, borrow from China RM55 billion, we don't think it should cost that much. The condition, is the contract given to Chinese company, used its own workers, brought everything from there. So what is there for Malaysia. We want to gain something for Malaysia," he said.

Meanwhile, Dr Mahathir said the government was currently negotiating with Proton's Chinese owner to have Malaysians supply its cars components.

"We want to try and have locals supplying the components and also maybe set up a joint venture," he said when asked to comment on his meeting with Geely representatives last week.

On his recent comments hinting at reviewing Malaysia's water agreement with Singapore, Dr Mahathir said it was not an urgent matter as the government had other issues to be resolved at the moment.

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