

Any leader under probe can take leave or remain on duty - Mahathir

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KUALA LUMPUR, July 17 (Bernama) -- Any leader under investigation by the authorities has the option of going on leave or remaining on duty so long as he or she has not been proven guilty, Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today.

“Ya (yes) ... you can take leave or you can carry on (being on duty). You are not guilty until proven,” he said after officiating at the *Beyond Paradigm Summit* here.

Dr Mahathir was asked for his response to a call by PKR information chief Datuk Seri Shamsul Iskandar Mohd Akin that any leader alleged to have been involved in misconduct should go on leave voluntarily to facilitate the investigation by the authorities.

Shamsul Iskandar had reportedly said that it is important to allow the investigation to be conducted fully in an independent and fair manner.

Asked about the detention of an aide to PKR president Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, along with two other men, over the investigation into the viralled sex video involving a minister, Dr Mahathir said: “This is the first time I’ m hearing (this).”

Commenting on the arrest, Dr Mahathir said the whole thing is about politics and it’ s not about exposing somebody’ s wrongdoing.

“It’ s about politics in order to prevent somebody from being able to succeed in politics. It’ s a political scheme that is definitely intended to prevent somebody from succeeding,” he said.

On the request from China for “friendly consultations” on Malaysia’ s reported seizure of more than RM1 billion from the bank account of state-owned China Petroleum Pipeline Engineering (CPP) over incomplete pipeline projects, Dr Mahathir said Malaysia is always ready to talk to China all the time.

The seizure comes nearly a year after Malaysia suspended two pipeline projects, valued at US\$2.3 billion, in which CPP was the lead contractor.

In reference to the fifth anniversary today of the Malaysia Airlines Flight MH17 tragedy, Dr Mahathir said Malaysia is still sad over the incident.

“We are sad because it was something done intentionally, but we do not know who launched the rocket,” he said.

Flight MH17 was flying from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur when it was shot down on July 17, 2014, over then war-torn eastern Ukraine, killing all 283 passengers and 15 crew on board.

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