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Umno-Assembly

HEATED UMNO ASSEMBLY PREDICTED OVER CURRENT AFFAIRS

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 1 (Bernama) -- The attacks on the Malaysian currency by rogue speculators, the manipulation of the economy and a letter on the purported sex scandal involving Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim are expected to figure prominently at the Umno general assembly scheduled from Sept 4 to 7 here.

Heated debates are also expected on the positions of muftis and certain religious leaders, whose recent speeches were highly critical of the government, over the Islamic law issue.

But everything will depend on the keynote opening address of the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, to be delivered on Friday, Sept 5.

As usual, Dr Mahathir, in his policy speech will certainly be touching on current issues facing the nation and the steps initiated to address the problem.

Malaysian economists and intellectuals have concurred that the rogue speculators are part of the normal global business activities, but the issue at hand is whether they had used the situation as a weapon to destroy the economy of a nation, like Malaysia which has no means to withstand their onslaught.

In this respect, Dr Mahathir had repeatedly said he could accept the situation if it was just plain speculations, but the scenario created had reached the manipulative level.

The government, he said, had strong proofs to show that these had gone beyond the bounds of speculation and it was more disappointing to note that many locals within the wealthy group, who had immensely benefitted from the nation's wealth, had also been involved, taking advantage of the situation.

On the poison letter alleging Anwar's involvement in a sex scandal, Dr Mahathir had said it was a frame-up by certain people out to suppress Anwar as they believed that Anwar was his chosen successor.

The mufti and fatwa issues are likely to be hot topics, following Dr Mahathir's reaction to the manner with which the Selangor Islamic Religious Affairs Department had acted against three Muslim beauty contestants as well as the Sarawak Islamic Religious Affairs Department' directive banning Muslims from taking part in body-building contests in the state recently.

The Umno Supreme Council (MT) had early last month decided to review the manner with which Islamic laws are enforced in the country, and the powers of the mufti and religious officers.

Dr Mahathir is set to meet the muftis tomorrow to explain the government's position on such matters and to correct their perception of the government's intention as well as the issuing of fatwas that would confuse the Muslim community.

This year's Umno general assembly, without election for party posts, will be attended by over 1,900 delegates -- 1800 divisional delegates while the remaining others are the MT, Umno Youth and Wanita Umno delegates.

Anwar will open the Umno Youth and Wanita Umno meeting simultaneously on Sept 4. --BERNAMA

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