

COURTS DECIDE

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Judiciary not beholden to the Government, says Mahathir

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KUALA LUMPUR: The judiciary in Malaysia is not beholden to the Government and it has in many instances made rulings against the Government.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the Government had not complained over court decisions which were

not in its favour.

"The judiciary declared that Umno was an illegal party. We had to reform Umno. We were put in very big trouble by the decision.

"The judiciary also sentenced many party officials who were holding high posts in the Government like ministers, chief ministers and mentris besar.

"They were convicted by the judiciary but we didn't complain and demonstrate," he told reporters after chairing the Barisan

Nasional pre-council meeting yesterday where he explained to Barisan MPs and senators the nation's financial situation and the strategy for the 1999 Budget.

Dr Mahathir said that in the case of the opposition, there was one case where an opposition MP was found guilty and fined less than RM2,000 which allowed him to retain his seat.

"This is discrimination but we did not protest," he said.

"The judiciary in Malaysia is not

beholden to the Government unlike in some other countries where you can be sure that they will decide for the Government.

"(They will also) make sure that whoever attacked the Government will be punished to the point of no return.

"But in Malaysia decisions are made without any regard for the Government," he said.

On comments by leaders, politicians and groups in the Philippines and Indonesia over the sacking of

Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim and the handling of his case by the court, Dr Mahathir said:

"That is their right. If they want they can raise the matter but we can also raise matters pertaining to their countries. I wish they will give a chance to the court to decide."

The Prime Minister said that under the legal system in this country, the courts would decide any

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matter pertaining to the law, adding that the people made their decisions through the democratic process of election.

"Maybe in their country (it is) not the court that will decide but the mobs in the streets. In both these countries, we see the mobs

making decisions," he said.

Dr Mahathir also chided racism and lack of impartiality in the police force in the West and cited the case of a black man beaten up in Los Angeles several years ago by police officers and their subsequent acquittal.

The Prime Minister also cited the recent shooting of a Japanese

national in the United States when he knocked on the door of a white resident.

"The white man was found not guilty because he shot the Japanese in self-defence against mugging. This is the country where there is no justice at all for non-whites. These same people are trying to teach us about justice."