

# PM: Religion being **misused**

By WAN HAMIDI HAMID

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KUALALUMPUR: Supporters of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim are misusing religion to incite people to violently overthrow the Government, said Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

The Prime Minister said Anwar's supporters were trying to create a situation similar to the recent Jakarta riots which forced Suharto to step down as the Indonesian president.

At a press conference yesterday, Dr Mahathir was asked about the **planned** rally at the National Mosque after the Friday prayers today to show support for the former finance minister.

"They believed the Government could be toppled that way and the court case against Datuk Seri **Anwar** could be prevented.

"There's nothing much we can do. If we act tough, CNBC will show pictures (of the police in action) 1.5 times a day.

"(The Nazi Germany propaganda chief Joseph Goebbels said if you repeat a lie many times, people will believe it. That is CNBC's strategy. Tell a lie many many times, eventually **people** will believe it," he said.

Dr Mahathir was sneaking to reporters after chairing the National Information Technology Council at the Prime Minister's Office yesterday.

When asked whether the recent demonstrations in the city could escalate to racial riots, the

Prime Minister said they should be stopped because if left unchecked, they could lead to looting and **rape**.

He said **Anwar's** supporters knew that if they resisted violently, the authorities had to react the same way, thus showing off the violent side of the security forces.

"With that, the foreign media will shoot the scene and show it many times (on television) so that it will show that Asians are **really** terrible people, that Asians do not know how to rule themselves and that we should go **back** being their colony," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said those who held the demonstrations were hoping that they could topple the

Government, including himself, so that others could take over the country and prevent **Anwar's** case from being heard in an open court.

He said **Anwar's** only fear was to be tried in an open court where **all** his activities would be exposed in public.

"So whatever that can be done to prevent the **open** trial would be done by **Anwar's** supporters. For **Anwar**, he wants to be tried by his own followers. He does not want to be tried in court.

"That's why he had earlier said that the courts are colluding with the police, the prosecutors and me, that it is all a conspiracy (against him)," he added.

On why 16 people were

<sup>46</sup>  
detained under the Internal Security Act, the Prime Minister said the police acted according to their 'own assessment of things.

He said that although the police did not consult him about it, he believed they must have had good reasons to detain those people, usually for questioning.

On allegations that **Anwar** would be injected with HIV, Dr Mahathir said there were no blood tests in relation to HIV for **Anwar**.

"However, any allegation made must be supported by facts. If there are facts, we will accept (the charge) but if there are no facts, the person who made the **allegations** is actually lying, **trying** to reduce the people's confidence in the police. That is a vicious thing to do," he added.

Asked by a foreign journalist who pointed out that there were Malaysians who were worried about the handling of the situation by the Government and the police, the Prime Minister said they were only the minority.

"They like to be patted on the back by foreigners. But the majority of Malaysians believe we can rule our **country** better without any help from you (the foreign media)," he said.

On Umno Youth's memorandum to the party secretary-general on its chief **Datuk Ahmad Zahid** Hamidi's position, Dr Mahathir said the **matter** would be discussed by the Umno supreme council.