

PM: Don't disrupt process of law

By SHAMSUL AKMAR

KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday urged supporters of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim to let the court decide whether the accusations against him are true or not.

The Prime Minister said they should not disturb the process of law and justice in the country.

"Let the court decide on this and if after that, he is found to be innocent, support him. Don't worry, support him openly.

"But the act to prevent the case from being heard is not good according to our reli-

gion." Dr Mahathir told a press conference at Sri Perdana, his official residence.

He said he wanted to advise Anwar's supporters not to disrupt the process of law in the country.

"If we disturb the judge, the judge will not be able to mete out justice," he said.

Dr Mahathir also urged the supporters not to spread lies, adding that the authorities were finding it difficult to stop the spreading of rumours either through poison-pen letters or the Internet.

"But Anwar is committing a big sin as a Muslim. He not only lied to me but also to the rakyat by portraying himself

as a pious person when all the while he was committing a very despicable act.

"There are people who claim to be staunch Muslims but are prepared to defend a person like Anwar. They trespass into mosques to support Anwar's despicable act. That is sinful.

"Not only that, even in the mosque they tried to spread pamphlets which are full of lies. It is a dirty act for them to commit in the mosque where we go to pray," he said.

Dr Mahathir said they spread lies like the one that Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak had resigned.

"Najib has said he has no intention whatsoever to resign.

Lying is bad and when they use the mosque to lie, it is the worst form," he added.

Dr Mahathir also expressed regret over the distribution of leaflets containing lies and rumours of riots occurring in Kuala Lumpur.

"It has caused fear among outsiders and they fear coming here. These people claim they are going to hold a major demonstration.

"Why the need to demonstrate when we have given the assurance of an open court hearing. But the hearing cannot be held unless calm prevails."

Dr Mahathir said police initially had no intention of de-

taining Anwar under the ISA and had wanted to bring him to court early this week.

"Unfortunately, he purposefully held violent demonstrations and had to be detained under the ISA."

The Prime Minister said the police did not want to act during the recent Commonwealth Games here because they were busy.

"Anwar knew this and purposefully took the opportunity to hold demonstrations so that he would not be charged in court this week," he added.

Dr Mahathir said Anwar had planned to cause disturbances similar to those in Indonesia so that his trial was postponed or not held at all.

"He feels if there are riots like those in Indonesia, the Government will not be able to function properly. Maybe the rioting will lead to looting and the Government will have to step down or be toppled.

"If the Government is toppled, as had happened to President Suharto, there will be no trial at all and Anwar will escape and his offences will not be exposed.

"This is what Anwar is doing to avoid being brought to trial," the Prime Minister said.

He said police had to be careful not to use force because if they hurt someone while trying to disperse the demonstrators, the foreign media would run down the country and Anwar would gain sympathy from the world.

"We are in a dilemma. We want to show that we are not an authoritarian government. Actually, we have sufficient

laws to curb rioting but we don't want to use them.

"That is why we allowed Anwar to have the mammoth rally in Kota Baru, to show that we are democratic. But this appears to be ineffective and we have to find ways to control such things because we know that if the country is not peaceful, many parties will want to capitalise on the situation," Dr Mahathir said.

He said he had not invited the foreign media to the news conference yesterday because their reports had never contained any truth.

"Today, I met representatives attending the Young Presidents Organisation Conference. They said that before coming here, there were suggestions that the situation in Malaysia was bad, and they feared that they would have to cancel their trip.

"But they had a shock because it is peaceful here with a few demonstrations and there is no rioting," he said.

He said the foreign media had tried to run down Malaysia by portraying that there was no longer any democracy in the country and this might later be used by other countries to impose economic sanctions.

Dr Mahathir said Anwar was also prepared to use anything to gain sympathy, including his wife Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Ismail and his children.

"The foreign media has given attention to Wan Azizah and has even labelled her as the second Aung San Suu Kwi. The foreign media has exaggerated the issue so that Malaysia will have continuous problems."