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Parliament-Mahathir (Anwar)

ANWAR DETAINED UNDER ISA FOR INCITING RIOTS, SAYS PM

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 29 (Bernama) -- The Dewan Rakyat special sitting today was told that former Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim is detained under the Internal Security Act (ISA) for trying to incite his supporters to start riots.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said it was obvious that through his speech at the National Mosque here on Sept 20 Anwar had inflamed the sentiments of his followers to create disturbances in several areas.

"As a well-known orator and a student leader, he knows that what he says can inflame his supporters' feelings," he said replying to allegations by Opposition Leader Lim Kit Siang (DAP-Tanjung) relating to Anwar's detention during debate on the Securities Industry (Central Depository) (Amendment) Bill 1998.

Soon after Dr Mahathir, who is also First Finance Minister, finished tabling the bill, Lim stood up for debate and straight on spoke about Anwar's detention accusing the government of acting unjustly.

Dr Mahathir then rose and replied that police had already informed Anwar that the rallies he had been mounting were unlawful but Anwar ignored these reminders.

"Police would not use the ISA but when he chose the mosque to start riots, this is wrong," said Dr Mahathir, who is also the Home Minister.

The prime minister also said among the reasons for Anwar not being produced in court much sooner was because of threats of massive rioting nation-wide.

"Anwar's wish was for me to step down so that he would get away without being tried," he said.

Dr Mahathir said in most countries it was normal for Cabinet members to be dismissed without causing disturbances.

House opposition members, led by Lim, frequently disrupted Dr Mahathir's reply by hurling various accusations especially relating to the action taken against Anwar.

Besides questioning the prime minister's action even before charges against Anwar were heard in court, Lim also queried whether Dr Mahathir had proof that it was Anwar who instigated his supporters to riot.

Dr Mahathir said Anwar had not directly ordered his supporters to riot but through his inflammatory speeches he had clearly intended them to start rioting.

The prime minister said it was wrong for Anwar's supporters to use a mosque and chant holy verses to express support for him because a mosque is a place for worship and not for political activities that inconvenience others who wanted to perform prayers.

Lim was repeatedly reminded by Deputy Speaker Datuk Ong Tee Kiat to focus his debate on the bill after several government back-benchers rose in objection to his deliberations.

When Lim ignored the deputy speaker's reminders, Ong then switched off Lim's microphone and the MP for Kepong Dr Tan Seng Giaw then took his turn to debate the bill.

Earlier, even before Dr Mahathir could begin his speech tabling the bill, Karpal Singh (DAP-Jelutong) rose to move a motion to adjourn today's special sitting to tomorrow to enable members go through the five bills to be tabled during the two-day sitting.

However, Speaker Tun Mohamed Zahir Ismail rejected Karpal's motion saying that MPs had been given sufficient time to scrutinise all five bills which were distributed to them last Saturday.

-- BERNAMA
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