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LEAD Mahathir-Anwar

ANWAR DETAINED UNDER ISA AS HE INSTIGATED VIOLENCE

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 22 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today police had intended to arrest and charge Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim in court but were forced to detain him under the Internal Security Act (ISA) when he instigated rioting.

"The fact is that he (Anwar) has been allowed to break the law many, many times. The climax was on Sunday when he instigated his followers to riot," Dr Mahathir told a packed news conference at the Prime Minister's Department here.

The prime minister started off the news conference by explaining for about 20 minutes Anwar's arrest and the Umno Supreme Council meeting yesterday before taking questions from local and foreign journalists.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Home Minister and Umno president, said he briefed the Supreme Council on the reasons for Anwar's arrest.

He however said that no matter how much he explained about Anwar's arrest, certain quarters like the foreign media would not believe him.

Dr Mahathir said it was clear that Anwar was stirring up emotions among his supporters to create a situation similar to the one in Indonesia which saw Suharto resigning as President.

"They hope that way they can overthrow the government particularly myself... He urged them to do damage to the peace and order in this city," he said.

Anwar was arrested under Section 73(1) (a) of the ISA by police at his house on Sunday night after leading an illegal rally and procession which later erupted into rioting.

The section provides for the detention of anyone acting in a manner prejudicial to national security.

Anwar, who was sacked as Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister on Sept 2, has been implicated in various sexual offences.

Dr Mahathir said despite his detention under the ISA, Anwar would still be charged in court when police had enough evidence.

The prime minister said it was not the intention of the police to arrest Anwar under the ISA.

"But due to his violent behaviour, they arrested him under the ISA ... but I believe it is their intention to charge Anwar in the right manner," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Anwar delivered an inflammatory speech at an illegal gathering at Masjid Negara (the National Mosque) instigating his supporters to riot.

"The police had to act," said the Prime Minister, adding that he had not expected Anwar to go that extent.

Even the police, he said, did not believe that there would be violence and had been preparing to make an ordinary arrest with proper charges.

Dr Mahathir said there was also evidence that Anwar was trying to create riots in other parts of the country.

He said the fact that when his supporters went to the Putra World Trade Centre last Sunday to create trouble and destroy an Umno exhibition proved that they were not Umno members.

"This is something which Umno members will not do," he said.

He said Anwar's supporters had also marched towards his residence in Sri Perdana later Sunday night apparently with the intention of creating more problems, including burning his house.

Dr Mahathir said Anwar took part in the rioting last Sunday to divert attention from the real issues following the confession by Anwar's adopted brother Sukma Darmawan and his friend Dr Munawar Anees that they had allowed Anwar to sodomise them.

Anwar also knew that the police were busy on that day because of the just-concluded 16th Commonwealth Games, he said.

"Also because he felt that the presence of large number of foreign journalists (for the KL Games) will be good for his cause. And it has worked for him," Dr Mahathir said.

"The (Anwar's) whole idea is to damage the good image of the country, create loss of confidence and portray Malaysia as not stable," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Anwar's intention was to have the police arrest him under the ISA so that he could blame the government and himself as practising ditatorship.

"Anwar's greatest fear is to be charged in court, then all he has done will be revealed," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Anwar has not sworn in the mosque to deny all the allegations against him "although I don't put much value about Anwar's swearing in the mosque."

"This man cannot be allowed to become a leader of this country. That is what I told the Umno Supreme Council members yesterday," he said.

Dr Mahathir also said the crowds at Anwar's assemblies were not all made up of firm believers of Anwar.

Dr Mahathir defended police action against last Sunday's rioters as justified although some people were hurt.

On the detention of Umno Youth chief Datuk Ahmad Zahid Hamidi, also under the ISA, he said he was not sure whether charges would be filed.

"It's up to the police," he said.

On Zahid's position in Umno, he said that would be for the party to decide.

The Prime Minister said the situation in the country "is very much stable and there is no need for anybody to worry."

He dismissed rumours that the government was planning to declare a state of emergency.

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