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Anwar to be charged in court (HL)

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KUALA LUMPUR, Tues. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, who is being detained under the Internal Security Act, will be charged in open court and the charges will include sodomy.

However, Dr Mahathir, who is also Home Minister, said it was up to the Public Prosecutor and the police as to when to initiate the proceedings.

He said it was only proper and a matter of time for the sacked Deputy Prime Minister to be charged with sodomy since two persons with whom he had allegedly committed the act had already confessed in court.

"He will be charged because you can't have these two people being charged without charging him because he is a partner."

He said the law will would take its course although Anwar's greatest fear is was that he will would be charged in court because then "all the things that he had done will be revealed and all the witnesses will be able to appear to give evidence".

At a Press conference at his office this afternoon, Dr Mahathir Mohamad said police had in fact intended to arrest and charge Anwar in court but were forced to detain him under the ISA when he instigated rioting in the federal capital on Sunday.

The Press conference, which was to brief the media on the outcome of yesterday's special Umno supreme council meeting, lasted almost an hour.

It was also attended by a big group of foreign journalists, including those from major television stations.

Dr Mahathir, who is Umno president, said the supreme council met to be briefed on what had happened in the city, particularly with regard to the arrest of Anwar and the reasons or for the arrest.

"Of course, this may not be believed by certain members of the Press who assume that I am a dictator and who wants to arrest my potential rival. To those who believe that, it is really not worthwhile for me to explain because no matter what I say, that will still be the conclusion."

Calling Anwar a rebel-rabble-rouser, Dr Mahathir said it is was a fact that Anwar was allowed to break the law many times by holding illegal meetings and rallies and was not arrested.

"But the climax came on Sunday when he instigated his followers to riot, to be violent and to attack certain places. It is clear that he was working up emotions in order to develop the situation that was found in Indonesia when these people rioted daily and tried to obstruct the normal life in the city.

"They hope that with that they can overthrow the Government, in particular overthrow me, which is not of great consequence anyway, since I am already 73 years old and I can't last forever.

The Prime Minister disclosed that Anwar's supporters also broke into the Umno building at the Putra World Trade Centre and destroyed pictures of past Umno leaders in the museum gallery there. This, he noted, was something that Umno members would not do.

"The supporters also marched towards my house. What their intentions were was is something I cannot be sure, about, but there was talk among them about burning the house or something like that.

"It is obvious that from merely talking to his followers in his house as well as elsewhere, he has now decided to become a rebel-rabble-rouser who wants to instigate violence." he added.

Asked about the fact that many people still do not believe that Anwar had committed the lurid sexual acts, Dr Mahathir said he too took a long time to believe the stories.

He said he was even told about Anwar's homosexual tendencies by Tun Hanif Omar when he was Inspector-General of Police but he dismissed it. (Hanif retired in January 1993.

Dr Mahathir said he personally interviewed people who said they had engaged in illegal sex acts with Anwar because he initially did not believe the allegations.

He said The Prime Minister said those whom he interviewed gave their statements voluntarily. because He made sure that these people they were not pressured by anybody.

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