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`Anwar will be charged if rioting stops'

Kamarul Yunus

DATUK Seri Anwar Ibrahim, who was removed from the Cabinet and party post early this month, will be brought to court for trial if his supporters stop rioting, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said.

"If his (Anwar) followers do not riot, he can be brought to court. He has also pre-empted it by saying there will not be a fair trial," the Prime Minister told newsmen after launching the Malaysian franchise exhibition and conference in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Dr Mahathir, who is also Home Minister, was asked whether the delay in charging Anwar was because the evidence was not sufficient and strong.

Riot police had to quell Anwar's supporters outside the courthouse in Kuala Lumpur last Monday when they turned unruly while waiting for Anwar to be produced in court.

On the demonstration at the National Mosque after the Friday prayers yesterday he described those involved as abetting a person who has committed a sin.

"By demonstrating and telling lies in a mosque they have not only sinned but also condoning a person who had committed a sin," he added.

Dr Mahathir reiterated that Anwar wants to create a disorder so that the authorities cannot try him in an open court.

On British Foreign Minister Robin Cook's comment on Thursday that Anwar's lawyers were not allowed to see him (Anwar) and that he hoped there would be a fair trial, Dr Mahathir said Cook should have asked him when he was in Malaysia, while accompanying Queen Elizabeth II for the closing of the 16th Commonwealth Games.

"He (Cook) was here. He never asked me anything. He could have heard it from the so-called horse's mouth," he said, adding the international community has never considered Asian courts, including Malaysia's, as being fair, unlike those in Europe.

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