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Decision on book after study of police findings

IPOH, Thurs. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today he will decide whether or not the book 50 Dalil Mengapa Anwar Tidak Boleh Menjadi Perdana Menteri should be banned after studying recommendations from the police.

Dr Mahathir, who is also the Home Minister, said since there had been a report made, the police had to investigate.

"If they (the contents) can adversely affect the peace and safety of the country, the book can be banned," he added.

Dr Mahathir was replying to questions from reporters whether or not he intends to ban the book.

Before the Government could decide on the course of action, it must first determine whether the contents of the book had any basis for action to be taken, he said.

"So the Government is investigating and if the contents are found to be baseless, then action will be taken against the publisher," he added.

Asked whether there would be arrests of people involved, Dr Mahathir said he did not know.

"It's not my job (to order any arrest). They (police) do not have to ask me if they want to arrest anybody. If there is a case, they will take action," he said.

"If they (police) have to refer to me when they want to arrest (anyone), it will be difficult for me ... I have a lot of other duties...plenty of work."

Asked whether from his observation he found that the book had affected the performance of his deputy Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, the Prime Minister said:

"I don't know. From my observation, he does his job as normal."

In a written reply at the Dewan Rakyat on Monday, Dr Mahathir had said it was difficult for the Government to prevent completely the printing and distribution of such publications.

Senator Datuk Zainuddin Maidin had asked what the Government planned to do to ensure that such books did not get written, published or distributed in future.

According to the Printing Presses and Publications Act 1984, a person can publish and distribute books without authorisation from the Home Ministry.

However, he said that if the contents disturbed the peace, safety or moral of the public, the book can be banned by the ministry.

On July 31, Anwar obtained an interlocutory injunction against the author and publisher of the book until the disposal of his libel suit against them.

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