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Dr M questions motives of observers

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has questioned the real motives of foreign organisations and individuals who have sent observers to the trial of former Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

"These observers appear to be here not to watch the trial. They are putting the courts on trial, putting the judges on trial. This is undue pressure on the judges," he said.

Speaking at a press conference in Subang yesterday, Dr Mahathir said, he agreed with Judge Datuk S. Augustine Paul's ruling that these foreigners should not be given observer status or special treatment.

"They should not come here to oversee the judge, as if they are so superior, that they know better how justice is administered," the Prime Minister said.

Dr Mahathir said he is doubtful about the standard of justice in the countries of these observers themselves.

"In their countries you find the administration of justice is very much to be desired. People are tried in the media, in the newspapers first, and then only they appear before the courts. By which time, the judge and the jury would not have a private opinion of their own," he said.

Paul had on Monday denied the request of foreign organisations, individuals and the Malaysian Bar Council to be given observer status in the Anwar trial.

The organisations involved included Amnesty International, Law Asia, Human Rights Watch, Justice International London, Adnan Buyong Nasution of the Indonesian Legal Aid Bureau and United Nations rapporteur Datuk Param Kumaraswamy.

"They can come here, and if they have the seat, they go in. (There is) no special status as observer," Dr Mahathir said.

Meanwhile, asked about Ceupacs' request for the Government to give incentive payments to civil servants to replace bonuses, the Prime Minister said: "I will meet with them."

Asked about the possibility of such a payment being made, Dr Mahathir said the meeting will have to take place first before a decision is made.

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