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Government pledges to abide by court order

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KUCHING, Tues. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today the Government will abide by the High Court order that no statement should be made on the guilt or innocence of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim outside the context of his trial.

But, Dr Mahathir said that they (Anwar's lawyers and supporters) should also do the same.

"We respect the decision of the court. If the judge says we cannot speak, we will not speak. But they will also have to abide by the judge's decision and not only expect others to," he told a Press conference at the Kuching International Airport at the end of his half-day visit here.

Dr Mahathir had earlier opened the 52nd annual general meeting of the Associated Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry at the Hilton Hotel and the RM6 million Sekolah Rendah Bantuan Chung Hua No. 6 in Taman Wee and Wee here.

At the Kuala Lumpur High Court yesterday, Judge Datuk Augustine Paul had ordered that, henceforth, no statement should be made, outside the context of the trial, on the guilt or innocence of Anwar, who faces five charges of corrupt practices and five charges of sodomy.

Paul, before whom Anwar was produced yesterday, made the ruling following a statement by his leading counsel Raja Aziz Addruse who said that there were people in high office who had already made judgments on his client's case.

The Prime Minister, when asked whether the court order would affect Umno's on-going meetings to explain to leaders and members about the sacking of Anwar and his expulsion from the party, said Umno would continue to do so in closed-door meetings.

Dr Mahathir also made a point of "they", in reference to Anwar's lawyers and supporters, having made statements to the foreign media which he said were "one-sided and not at all fair".

The foreign media, he said gave the "views of the other side and had never given any consideration to us".

Dr Mahathir was also asked on the statement by the International Monetary Fund on Sunday that controls on capital movement, while never an effective measure, could be appropriate in certain circumstances.

The Prime Minister said from what he could see, countries in East Asia that were really not progressing (during the regional economic downturn) were those receiving IMF aid.

"They face a contraction next year. South Korea, Thailand and Indonesia will face one that is bigger than the countries which are not receiving IMF aid or practising IMF ways. The IMF itself does not really know the effects of its conditionalities."

Dr Mahathir said that the IMF would not know of long-term effects of these controls adding that he found China to have been most successful in currency control.

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