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Mahathir-TV

IF YOU BELIEVE CNN, THERE ARE RIOTS EVERY HOUR, SAYS MAHATHIR

By: Azman Ujang

TOKYO, Oct 16 (Bernama) -- Television news channels like CNN and CNBC came under fire from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today for portraying as if anti-government riots happen every hour in Malaysia since the sacking of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim as deputy prime minister.

He singled out the Singapore-based American-owned CNBC for blowing out of proportion rallies held occasionally by Anwar supporters.

Answering questions at a forum attended by about 100 corporate leaders, bankers and academicians here, the prime minister likened the hourly replays of scenes of rioting in Malaysia to that showing President Clinton hugging ex-White House intern Monica Lewinsky.

"I have seen CNN showing President Clinton hugging Monica Lewinsky at least 1,000 times already. I think the hugging happened only once," he said.

"CNN and especially CNBC have been showing the riots by Anwar supporters every hour as if there are riots in Malaysia all the time," said Dr Mahathir.

Dr Mahathir spoke of the law in Malaysia which made it illegal for as many as five people to hold an assembly without police permit and said police action against such assemblies was only in accordance with the rule of law.

He was also asked about Anwar's appearance with a black eye in a Kuala Lumpur High Court to face charges of sodomy and corruption earlier this month.

Anwar had alleged that he was beaten up by the police following his detention under the Internal Security Act (ISA) on Sept 20.

Anwar, who pleaded not guilty to the charges, has since been released from ISA detention but is being remanded in the Sungai Buloh prison outside Kuala Lumpur pending his trial which begins on Nov 2.

The prime minister said he too was "angry and concerned" about allegations of police brutality against his former deputy.

"This is something we don't tolerate and investigations are still going on to determine what actually happened. Those responsible will be punished accordingly," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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