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Mahathir-Media

MAHATHIR ASKS FOREIGN MEDIA TO GIVE BALANCED REPORT

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 30 (Bernama) -- The government does not prevent the foreign media from reporting on the pro-reform demonstrations and illegal assemblies by supporters of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim but they must also report on the explanations given by the government.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the foreign media particularly the CNN and CNBC repeatedly showed the demonstrations and illegal assemblies in the federal capital but did not report a word on his explanations or that of the government on Anwar's issue.

The foreign media repeated the demonstrations and illegal assemblies several times in a day to show to the world that Malaysia is another developing country which is incapable of administering the nation.

"They (foreign media) portrayed that we (the government) is stupid and cannot administer this country. To them, only the white men are clever and can run the country," he told a news conference called to announce the renaming of the Energy, Telecommunications and Posts Ministry to Energy, Communications and Multimedia Ministry from Sunday (Nov 1). Asked whether foreign countries had a hand in the demonstrations and illegal assemblies, Dr Mahathir, who is also Home Minister, said: "I dare not say on the involvement of foreign countries but there is encouragement from outside."

Dr Mahathir said he was not afraid to criticise anyone who had done wrong including the local media and trade unions.

He reiterated that the actions by Anwar's supporters to hold street demonstrations and illegal assemblies were an exercise in futility.

Their actions affected the income of petty traders, taxi drivers and instilled fear on foreigners wanting to visit Malaysia, he said.

He also regretted their actions to use mosques to stage demonstrations and illegal assemblies, saying mosques are places to perform prayers and not to demonstrate or start violence.

He said the protesters purposely challenged police during demonstrations and illegal assemblies to enable the foreign media to take photographs to show to the world the Malaysian police were ruthless.

On the involvement of civil servants in pro-Anwar demonstrations and illegal assemblies, Dr Mahathir said as far as he knew, about 100 people were involved and they should not blame the government if action was taken against them.

As civil servants, they should know the procedures of the civil service and the actions that could be taken against them for breaching the General Orders and the country's laws, he said.

"They must be responsible for their actions and should not accuse the government of being cruel when action is taken against them," he said.

Asked whether the government is worried over the demonstrations and illegal assemblies, Dr Mahathir said: "If I say not alarming, tomorrow they will organise even bigger gatherings."

"What's important is that their actions affected the people particularly the poor who earned a living in Kuala Lumpur," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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