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APEC-NEWS-ANWAR

MAHATHIR SAYS ANWAR IS TALKING NONSENSE

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KUALA LUMPUR, NOV 18 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said "a lot of nonsense" is coming out from sacked Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He said an article written by Anwar in the Asian Wall Street Journal today showed that accusations that he (Anwar) had been prevented from voicing his views was "a lot of nonsense".

"A lot of nonsense is coming out from him through the foreign media as well," Dr Mahathir told a news conference at the end of the sixth Apec leaders summit here.

He was responding to a question on Anwar's article which criticised Dr Mahathir for alleged crony capitalism and called for political freedom in Asia.

Anwar also called on Asian nations to push on with the painful reforms needed to solve the financial crisis, instead of blaming outside factors such as international speculators.

Asked whether the authorities would clamp down on street demonstrations staged by Anwar's supporters after the Apec summit, Dr Mahathir said the authorities have treated the demonstrators well.

"But if they (demonstrators) beat up the police, are you going to submit to their doing. Police are human too ...they have to defend themselves," he said.

A reporter, contending that Dr Mahathir's daughter Marina had voiced sympathy towards gay rights, asked the Prime Minister whether Anwar's trial had caused a rift in his family as Anwar faces charges of sodomy.

"I don't think I like to discuss my family's problem here, this is about Apec," Dr Mahathir replied to applause from some journalists.

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