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Mahathir-Anwar

MAHATHIR NOT OVERLY CHOOSY OVER CHOICE OF SUCCESSOR

JITRA, Oct 2 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said he is not too choosy over the choice of his successor.

He said the man who would succeed him need not necessarily be very religious and only preoccupied with doing virtuous deeds at all times.

"It is suffice that the person does things acceptable by the people," he told reporters at a reception after Friday prayers at the Al-Falah Mosque at Guar Napai Felda land scheme near here.

Also present were Kedah Menteri Besar Tan Sri Sanusi Junid and residents from nearby villages.

Prior to Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's sacking as Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister last Sept 2 because of morality problems, Dr Mahathir had expressedly been endorsing Anwar as his would-be successor.

Dr Mahathir also criticised students, especially in tertiary institutions, who he said were too obsessed in supporting Anwar.

"They regard Anwar as someone who has never done wrong whereas they don't know who Anwar is," he said.

Anwar is currently detained under the Internal Security Act (ISA) for threatening national security following rioting in the federal capital by his followers last Sept 20.

He has been implicated in at least two sexual offences when two men confessed in court last Sept 19 that they had allowed themselves to be sodomised by the ex-DPM, an offence under Section 377D of the Penal Code.

Anwar was charged in the sessions court in Kuala Lumpur and Petaling Jaya this week on five counts of corruption and five counts of unnatural sex acts.

Dr Mahathir said a person displaying impeccable persona and carriage would indeed have to maintain such posture all the time.

The prime minister said if a person's motive for doing good was purely to garner support, he is unfit to be a leader.

"Believe me, I have acted rightly in this issue," he said referring to his decision to drop Anwar from the cabinet.

He however urged the people to be patient and let the court decide on all the charges of improprieties against Anwar.

"Let him be tried amidst calm and don't cause disturbances," he said.

The prime minister said even those too obsessed with and very fond of Anwar should refrain from acting in a manner that could undermine unity and cause split among Muslims.

Dr Mahathir said mosques should be used as a hub for activities beneficial to all Muslims and the community at large.

Later, Dr Mahathir attended a 45-minute briefing on development projects in Kubang Pasu by district officer Mohamed Farouk Che Ibrahim here.

Among other things, he was briefed on renovation to the district office and construction of new roads in Kubang Pasu.

Dr Mahathir is also the Member of Parliament for Kubang Pasu.

The prime minister later adjourned to a meet-the-people gathering at the Jitra Hall here.

-- BERNAMA

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