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Amien-Malaysia

SITUATION IN M'SIA DIFFERENT FROM INDONESIA, SAYS AMIEN RAIS

KUALA LUMPUR, July 10 (Bernama) -- Indonesia's most vocal opposition leader Dr Amien Rais said Malaysia unlike his country does not require a major reformation as the conditions here are different.

Corruption, cronyism and nepotism in Malaysia had not reached the "mega scale" seen in Indonesia, said the leader of the 28-million-strong Muhammadiyah movement.

"I agree that there may be similarities (between the two countries in these aspects) but in terms of the scale and magnitude they are different," he said in a speech on "Democracy and Reformation in Indonesia" at a public forum in Universiti Malaya here tonight.

The two-hour forum, organised by the International Movement for a Just World (JUST), was attended by about 600 people.

Dr Amien said that in his meeting with Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad earlier, the prime minister had stated that the conditions in the two countries were different and "I agreed with him".

Speaking to reporters after the forum, Dr Amien said Dr Mahathir told him of the need to be wary of the Western agenda to bring down the economies of Southeast Asian countries.

Dr Amien, a political science professor at Universiti Gadjadara in Jogjakarta, led the public protests in Indonesia that forced Suharto to step down as president in May.

He said he could not accept the view that the issue of nepotism, cronyism and corruption was part of a Western agenda, as it and other social ills had prevailed in Indonesia for a long time and had not just been brought from the West.

Describing his discussion with Dr Mahathir as a learning process, Dr Amien said they also spoke about the Malaysian and Indonesian economies.

Dr Amien also met Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

In his speech, Dr Amien said corruption was still under control in Malaysia as proven by the resignation of former Selangor Menteri Besar Tan Sri Muhammad Taib after he was charged in an Australian court for failing to declare the money he was carrying.

"I guess other cabinet ministers feel sorry for him. If it is in Indonesia, such an amount of money is regarded as peanuts," he said.

On the implications of the Indonesian reformation on Malaysia, he said there could be both good and bad effects.

"At a certain stage it can electrify an impact in Malaysia.

"It is up to you (Malaysians) to decide. Accept them if you want to be reformed and leave them if you don't want," he said.

--BERNAMA

RAZ SK