

# Law breakers will pay, says Mahathir

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KUALA LUMPUR: Barisan Nasional leaders continued their criticism of the opposition for organising the gathering which turned unruly and agitating the people from the National Mosque.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the government would not compromise with anyone who broke the law.

"This country has its laws which must be exercised and we must put a stop to the perception that we are afraid to enforce it for fear of it being made an issue," he said.

"It is because of this perception that makes the people disrespect the laws and they continue to think that they can do anything they like because no action will be taken against them.

"Everyone, whether local or foreigner, is equal under our laws," he told a press conference at the

end of his two-day visit to Perlis yesterday.

"You riot, you hurt people or you beat up the police, you will get arrested."

Citing Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's court case as an example, he said the authorities could not afford to compromise or discriminate between law breakers because it would cause more trouble.

"The problem with Anwar's case is that we are too lenient.

"There has not been anyone who is being tried in the Malaysian court that was given such a flexibility like what Anwar is getting.

"And because of that flexibility, the prosecution is unable to wrap up their case."

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi regretted the misuse of the mosque as a political platform by non-

Muslim opposition leaders.

"We have never forbade non-Muslims visiting mosques such as Masjid Negara or the Shah Alam mosque but non-Muslims must not use mosques to incite hatred."

At the illegal gathering organised by Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's supporters at Masjid Negara on Sunday, three non-Muslim opposition leaders were reported to have spoken from inside the mosque.

They were DAP Youth chief Teng Chang Khim, Parti Keadilan Nasional vice-president Tian Chua and Keadilan Youth assistant secretary N. Gobalackrishnan.

Wanita MCA chief Datuk Dr Ng Yen Yen said: "It is wrong to use places of worship, whether they are mosques, temples or churches, as political platforms and to advance one's political ambition."