

08 JUN 1999

Syed Hamid-Anwar

ANWAR'S TRIAL FAIR, SAYS SYED HAMID

TOKYO, June 8 (Bernama) -- Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar today defended the trial of former Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim on charges of corruption and sodomy as being conducted fairly.

"Even if you ... disagree with the fact that he was brought to trial, the fact remains that there is a rule of law that has been enforced, there is a due process of law...It is not extralegal," he told a breakfast meeting, here.

Kyodo, the Japanese News Agency, in its report today quoted the minister as denying that any freezing of funds to Malaysia by the World Bank is connected to the case, saying Malaysia received loans from the World Bank even "during the height of Anwar's case".

Anwar was sentenced to six years' jail for corruption on April 14. Court proceedings on sodomy charges are currently under way.

Syed Hamid is in Tokyo on a familiarisation visit to Japan, his first after becoming the Foreign Minister. The four-day visit ends today, Wisma Putra said in a statement today.

He held bilateral talks with his Japanese counterpart Masahiko Komura, met Malaysian students, exchanged views with members of the Japan-Malaysian Parliamentary Friendship League and the Japanese media.

In his meeting with Komura, Syed Hamid discussed matters of mutual interest to Malaysia and Japan and on regional and international issues.

He, among others, assured the Japanese government that the economic crisis would not affect Malaysia's intention to pursue the "Look East Policy," the statement said.

He also explained the economic recovery measures taken by the Malaysian government to stimulate the economy.

Syed Hamid also reiterated Malaysian government's appreciation to the Japanese government for the assistance rendered at the height of the economic crisis.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had also conveyed the Malaysian government's gratitude to his Japanese counterpart Keizo Obuchi.

According to the statement, Syed Hamid explained the stand of Malaysia and that of Asean to support the candidacy of Thailand's Deputy Prime Minister Dr Supachai Panitchpakdi for the World Trade Organisation Director-General's post.

He also expressed Malaysia's preparedness to call for a decision to be made by way of voting if a consensus could not be reached over whom to head the WTO.

Syed Hamid also took the opportunity to explain to Malaysian students in Japan on the latest economic and political developments back home.

-- BERNAMA

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