

09 OCT 1999

Mahathir-Arsenic

DR MAHATHIR GIVES A GENERAL EXPLANATION ON ARSENIC POISONING

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 9 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today gave a general explanation on arsenic poisoning based on his training as a medical doctor.

"I am explaining this as a medical doctor not about the case involving Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim. That is a court case. We cannot touch on matters pertaining to court trials," he said.

"What I am referring to is the claim made outside of the courthouse by Datin Seri Wan Azizah Wan Ismail, who accused the government of poisoning her husband," he told a news conference after chairing the Umno Supreme Council meeting here.

According to Dr Mahathir, the level of arsenic poisoning in a person's urine will not show up after a few days as distinct from its presence in the fingernails and hair, where it will remain intact until new nails and hair grew.

"The arsenic in urine can be found today, but tomorrow it will no longer be there. So when the urine is examined, there may be arsenic today but after several days it will disappear," he said.

Dr Mahathir said if arsenic had been used to kill Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, the level of arsenic in his urine should be more than 10,000 micrograms per litre.

However according to the laboratory reports, the level of arsenic in Anwar's urine was 230 micrograms which was compatible with eating cockles or seafood.

Dr Mahathir said if the level of arsenic in the body was five micrograms and when the person ate seafood it could rise to 230 micrograms and this level was not dangerous.

"However if a person suffers from arsenic poisoning it will go up to 10,000 micrograms in the urine and even at that level, it will no longer be there after three or four days," he said.

Dr Mahathir said if a person consumed arsenic poison, it could be detected in his fingernails and hair and it would not go away until new nails and hair grew.

Displaying his fingernails, Dr Mahathir said, "Say, the nail is up to this point and in one year, the new nail will have grown up to this point and hence the new nail will not show the arsenic."

Elaborating on the method of detecting arsenic, he said the arsenic effect on the nails and hair cannot be hidden even after five months of the person eating food containing arsenic.

Dr Mahathir said the examination for arsenic would take at the most three days except when other tests had to be conducted.

At times the results of the arsenic tests could be obtained within one day itself.

"Hence when the report says there is no arsenic in the nails this means that the person did not consume arsenic poison as this will show in the nails and hair," Dr Mahathir added.

The Prime Minister said journalists must know about arsenic and arsenic poisoning as this matter had become a major issue.

"The press should know about this arsenic thing as everyone is talking about arsenic," he said repeating that it was a general comment coming from a medical doctor.

Dr Mahathir also explained that HIV and AIDS would only show after a

long period of the person contracting the diseases.  
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