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Dr M: I never promised Anwar he won't be charged

PRIME MINISTER Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said he never promised Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim that he would not be charged in court if he resigned voluntarily.

The Prime Minister said the powers to charge anyone do not rest with him but with the Attorney-General.

"It is not my right to determine this. Actually, he (Anwar) himself brought up the charges following a police report made on the letters.

"When the police discovered that an offence had been committed by Anwar, action had to be taken. I have no power to stop that," he told reporters after tabling the mid-term review of the Seventh Malaysia Plan (1996-2000) at the Dewan Rakyat yesterday.

Dr Mahathir was asked whether further charges will be brought against the former deputy prime minister after the High Court found Anwar guilty on four counts of corruption.

It was the Prime Minister's first public comment on the case after Anwar was sentenced to a six-year jail term on April 14.

Dr Mahathir said it is up to the Attorney-General to decide whether more charges will be brought against Anwar.

Anwar still faces another corruption charge and four counts of sodomy.

The Prime Minister said: "This is something the Attorney-General will have to decide. I have no say in all these things. That is his business.

"This is the problem with Anwar. He thinks he can interfere with the process of the law which is why he interfered in the case involving the letters. He expects me to interfere in the same way."

Dr Mahathir said the law must be allowed to take its due course without any interference.

"We always talk about everybody being equal before the law. But when we or our friends have to face action, we say the laws are no good," he said.

On whether the charges against former Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Rahim Noor in court yesterday for attempting to cause grievous injury to Anwar will stop accusations that the Government practised selective prosecution, Dr Mahathir said he does not think so.

"No, not at all. Those who have made up their mind that this is a rotten country will continue to say so, their supporters will keep on saying things are rotten," he said.

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