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Mahathir-Anwar

MAHATHIR SAYS HE'S PERPLEXED BY ANWAR'S LONG STAY IN HOSPITAL

By: Muin Abdul Majid

VICTORIA FALLS (Zimbabwe), Oct 5 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said he is perplexed that Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has to spend a rather long spell in hospital for medical treatment.

"He stayed too long in hospital. I don't know what he does...is he sick at the hospital?" Dr Mahathir said when approached by journalists on his deputy Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's statement last Sunday that clinical tests conducted in Malaysia and overseas showed that Anwar did not suffer from arsenic poisoning.

(In KUALA LUMPUR today, a medical report by Hospital Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia (HUKM) read out in the High Court said that Anwar, the jailed former deputy prime minister currently on trial for sodomy, did not suffer from acute or chronic arsenic poisoning.)

Dr Mahathir is in Zimbabwe for the third Southern Africa International Dialogue (SAID '99) and had delivered a key-note address on Malaysia's experience in managing economic recovery while safeguarding socio-economic responsibilities at a dinner in conjunction with the event.

The prime minister told Malaysian journalists covering SAID '99 that Anwar seemed to have received several visitors while in hospital.

"Had he been ill as I was that day, obviously there would be no visitors," the prime minister said referring to the time he underwent treatment at the National Heart Institute in Kuala Lumpur for bronchitis upon returning from performing the Haj early this year.

"One who receives visitors is perhaps not that ill after all and can attend court," the prime minister added.

Anwar, who is currently serving a six-year jail term for corrupt practice, was admitted to the HUKM in Cheras last Sept 10 for medical examination on court's order after his lawyers claimed in the sodomy trial that Anwar suffered arsenic poisoning based on tests on his urine samples done secretly in an Australian laboratory.

Anwar was discharged from HUKM yesterday.

-- BERNAMA

MAM MAI RYN