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Mahathir-Rahim

RAHIM'S INDICTMENT WILL NOT STOP ANTI-GOVT CRITICISMS, SAYS PM

KUALA LUMPUR, April 22 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the indictment of former Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Noor today will not stop accusations of the Malaysian government practising selective prosecutions.

"No, not at all. Those who have made up their mind that this is a rotten country will continue to say so.

"And their supporters within this country will keep on saying that things are rotten in this country," he said when approached by reporters after presenting the mid-term review of the Seventh Malaysia Plan at Parliament House, here.

Dr Mahathir was commenting on criticisms levelled at the government concerning selective prosecutions.

The prime minister said: "It is a state of the mind. It has nothing to do with facts, systems. For example, I delivered this mid-term review of the Plan without any political motive. If you read through, I never mentioned anything political. I am only interested in the economy of the country and how we can revive it."

But, Dr Mahathir said, parliamentary Opposition Leader Lim Kit Siang had already prepared a political speech which he read out when the motion on the mid-term review was opened for debate.

"They had not heard my speech. You can see him reading his speech which means that he anticipates to talk about politics...about the detention of his son, about the black eye, judiciary system, how the law systems in the country are bad. All these are political," he said.

Abdul Rahim today pleaded not guilty in the Sessions Court here to a charge of wilfully attempting to cause grievous injury to former Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

A Royal Commission of Inquiry set up to investigate injuries suffered by Anwar while under police custody following his arrest on Sept 20 last year, recommended that action be taken against Abdul Rahim who had confessed that he was the one who did it.

"That is why I know that even if we give the brightest picture, it is not going to make any difference to these people...they have a closed mind, they will keep on repeating ad nauseam what they have been saying all this time," the prime minister said.

Asked whether anti-establishment groups could influence the masses to go against the government, Dr Mahathir said they could try but at the same time the government would also try to explain the actual situation to the people.

The prime minister also commented on street riots in the federal capital after the High Court convicted Anwar to six years jail on four counts of corruption last week.

Dr Mahathir expressed confidence that Malaysians at large are rational and would not join demonstrations or resort to rioting and destroy public property.

"I find that the people mostly do not support such actions aimed at creating chaos. The rioters are a frustrated lot and their number is not that big," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the trouble-makers were hoping to see disturbances, violence and looting as had happened in Indonesia.

"But Malaysians are not like that. The culprits are boys without

responsibilities. They are not bread-winners and not bothered about livelihood.

"They get scholarships easily...the people pay...not for them to study but to hold demonstrations," Dr Mahathir added cynically.

-- BERNAMA

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