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Mahathir-Truants

TRUANT GOVERNMENT MPs TO FACE ACTION, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 23 (Bernama) -- You are being watched. Play truant and face the action.

That is Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's stern reminder to Members of Parliament of the governing Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition who habitually skipped Dewan Rakyat sittings.

Dr Mahathir, who is BN chairman, said the conduct of BN MP's during House proceedings was being monitored and the regular truants would not be renominated to stand in the next general election.

"We'll take note and when election comes, we'll pick other people to stand," he said when asked about truancy among BN MPs, including during the current four-day sitting of the Dewan Rakyat ending today.

The question was raised at a press conference after Dr Mahathir launched Bank Negara's millennium commemorative gold coin here today.

However, the prime minister said, most of the MP's were registered as present but they followed proceedings from Parliament House lobby, lounges and the cafeteria through the public address system.

"The attendance register notes them as present... by being absent they will not get their allowances," he said.

Other than the Secretary to Parliament, BN officials themselves would take down the attendance of government MPs, he said.

"We'll also take note how long they spend in the House, whether they take part in debate, whether they're well-prepared for debate, among others, and we'll report this back to their electorate," the prime minister said.

On the action that the truant MPs would face, Dr Mahathir said: "We'll consider what action to take. There's no decision yet."

During last week's pre-council meeting between the prime minister and BN MPs on the eve of the current Dewan Rakyat sitting, Dr Mahathir said truancy should be stopped.

-- BERNAMA

GM RYN