

16 NOV 2000

Mahathir-Fujimori

FUJIMORI SEEKING POLITICAL ASYLUM IN M'SIA "LAUGHABLE", SAYS PM

By: Ahmad Fuad Yahya

BANDAR SERI BEGAWAN, Nov 16 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today dismissed a news report that Peruvian President Alberto Fujimori is seeking political asylum in Malaysia, saying "that's a laughable thing".

"(No request), I only learn it from him, he was telling me (that) the people are telling that I am going to Malaysia to seek political asylum," he said in between laughter during a news conference at Istana Darut Taqwa, where he was residing during the Apec summit.

A foreign news report today said Fujimori, who is facing domestic political problems, is seeking political asylum in Malaysia.

Dr Mahathir, Fujimori and leaders from 19 other economies including US President Bill Clinton, Chinese President Jiang Zemin and Russian President Vladimir Putin were here since Tuesday to attend the Eighth Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Leaders' summit.

The summit ended today with a leaders' declaration entitled "Delivering to the Community".

When asked on Malaysia's policy in giving political asylum, Dr Mahathir, who was speaking to Malaysian journalists, said: "Well, some people come and stay in our country but it is not our policy to give political asylum".

The prime minister said although he and Fujimori were good friends, it did not mean that he was giving him asylum.

"He is going to Japan (after Apec). I asked him where he is going...he said to Japan. He has no problems to be running away from his country," he said.

Meanwhile, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar said in Kuala Lumpur that the government "was not aware of any such move".

He told foreign reporters after presenting a donation to Mekong Valley flood victims at Wisma Putra that the government does not respond to news reports and said: "I think we'll leave it as that".

Fujimori visited Malaysia during an Apec forum which was held in the country in November 1998.

-- BERNAMA

MHI AFY ZS RM