

Anwar back to his old ways, says Mahathir

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KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim is going back to his "old ways" by politicising his back ailment.

The Prime Minister said Anwar had alleged in 1974, when he was an activist in the Malaysian Muslim Youths Movement (Abim), that there were people dying of hunger and had incited the people to hold demonstrations against the Government.

He said during Anwar's detention on alleged corruption he (Dr Mahathir) was accused of poisoning him.

"When we allowed him to attend his mother's funeral (recently), it was also politicised," Dr Mahathir added.

"All these are lies. He wants to play politics," the Prime Minister told reporters after launching the Workers Day celebrations at the National Administration Institute (Intan) here yesterday.

"I thought Anwar would change for the better when he joined Umno, but he went back to his old ways, inciting the people to be angry and holding demonstrations," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Anwar, who had repeatedly said he wanted to be operated overseas for his slipped disc, was repeating his efforts to create sympathy and public disturbance.

"Our decision not to allow Anwar overseas treatment is final because we have adequate facilities and equipment to treat him.

"We are not the type who don't have pity. But we know that he can be treated here (in Malaysia).

"Why should he receive

privileged treatment when he is a prisoner?" Dr Mahathir asked.

"There are comments that our operating theatres are like kitchens. This is an insult to us," he said, citing that he had undergone a four-hour heart surgery done by local doctors.

Asked whether Anwar might want to seek political asylum if he is allowed to be treated overseas, Dr Mahathir said: "I don't want to know the reasons."

Dr Mahathir said he had read reports about Dutch consultant Dr Thomas Hoogland. "He is not a full expert in back surgeries," he added.

"I'm a doctor myself. Don't tell me Dr Hoogland alone can treat him. This is *karut* (nonsense)," he added.

Dr Hoogland had recommended endoscopic surgery for Anwar at his clinic overseas.

On Monday, a group who called itself "concerned citizens" appealed to the Government to let Anwar seek treatment overseas on humanitarian grounds.

In Kuala Terengganu, Parti Keadilan Nasional president Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail said Anwar would issue a statement today on whether he would opt to undergo back surgery locally or be sent back to prison, reports *Bernama*.

"Anwar will make the decision as he is the patient," she told reporters after opening the Terengganu Keadilan convention yesterday.

On another matter, Dr Wan Azizah welcomed the Court of Appeal's judgment in the case involving former Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Noor.