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Mahathir-Anwar

DR MAHATHIR DISAGREES WITH SPECIAL TREATMENT GIVEN TO ANWAR

KUALA LUMPUR, April 3 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today he disagrees with the special treatment given to former deputy prime minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim who is now serving a 15-year jail sentence.

"I don't quite agree with the special treatment given to him which is not given to other people with backache," the prime minister told reporters after presenting the Third Outline Perspective Plan (OPP3) and the National Visionary Plan at the Dewan Rakyat, here.

He said this when asked on Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail's statement that the special treatment given to Anwar was just government propaganda.

Anwar, who is serving six years' jail for corrupt practice and nine for sodomy, has been warded at the Kuala Lumpur Hospital since last October for backache.

Dr Mahathir said it was not unusual for Anwar and his followers to say such a thing against the government.

"If you look at the history, when he was arrested he claimed that the government had injected (him with) the AIDS virus in the hope that this will cause his followers to riot. Then it was arsenic, again the followers took to the streets, now it is backache.

"You see, he wants to propagandise everthing, everthing is politics. There's nothing about health, it is all a political thing and the government has bent over backwards," he said.

Asked whether the government would consider Parti Keadilan Nasional's (Keadilan) appeal for Anwar to undergo surgery overseas, Dr Mahathir said it was not a question of an appeal from a political party but one where if a person was sick and needed treatment, he would be given treatment.

"The treatment given to Datuk Seri Anwar is special, no one with backache had been admitted to hospital for four months, five months and had to get a so-called specialist from overseas," he said.

Anwar was recently examined by Dr Thomas Hoogland of Germany at the Kuala Lumpur Hospital in connection with his backache.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysian surgeons and anaesthetists could perform whatever operation but the German expert considered them not competent.

"I underwent a heart operation which involved the stopping of the heart for some time in order to operate on me and I trusted the very same anaesthetists. To say that for a backbone operation they have no skill is absurd," he said.

The prime minister said the government would like to see the special instruments needed for the operation as mentioned by Dr Hoogland.

Dr Hoogland had recommended that Anwar be operated on overseas as some of the equipment are not available here and that Malaysian anaesthetists are not qualified.

"We want to see what is this special instrument that he has which cannot be flown in an aeroplane. It must be fantastic because we know for sure that he (Dr Hoogland) operated on someone in Dubai.

"We want to know how he carried out the operation in Dubai, whether he brought the anaesthetist along, or whether he brought the fantastic instrument along," he said.

He said Keadilan's politics was confined only to freeing Anwar.

"If it can run down the government, topple the government through

foreign pressure, through violence, that's Keadilan's politics but ultimately it's for the release of Datuk Seri Anwar," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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