

04 MAR 2001

Mahathir-Keadilan

KEADILAN ONLY WANTS TO FREE ANWAR, SAYS PM

PUTRAJAYA, March 4 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today that Parti Keadilan Nasional is not bothered about the country's security and economic and social matters but is only interested in fighting to free former deputy prime minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

The Prime Minister said it was willing to stage demonstrations and resort to violence in an attempt to topple the government.

"We want to maintain peace; they (Keadilan) are not bothered about peace. They see only one thing -- how to free Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim. (To them) The country is not important, the economy is not important, social security is not important," he told reporters after launching the National Landscape Day here.

He said this when asked to comment on a statement by Keadilan Youth chief Mohd Ezam Mohd Nor who reportedly said that Keadilan wanted to hold big demonstrations to topple the democratically elected government.

Dr Mahathir said Keadilan claimed to uphold democracy, social justice and the rule of law and yet was willing to act to the contrary.

Anwar is serving a six-year jail term for abuse of power and a nine-year sentence for sodomy.

Dr Mahathir said it appeared that Keadilan did not have any feeling of patriotism and instead was happy to be praised by the foreign media for staging such demonstrations.

He said Malaysia practised democracy and elections were held to give the people opportunities to express support for any party they liked.

He said those involved knew that if street demonstrations were used to topple the government in a democracy, the country's stability would continue to be affected even if they came to power.

Asked what action the government would take to tackle this matter, Dr Mahathir said "we see to what extent they want to do".

"They (Keadilan) saw what happened in a neighbouring country and appeared to be happy to see chaos, the killings of Muslims and Christians, Dayaks and Madurese; they are disappointed because there were no killings in Malaysia," he said.

Asked on reports that Internet news portal Malaysiakini.com received funding from currency speculator George Soros, Dr Mahathir said: "We have known that for a long time."

"People who love Malaysia would not support Malaysiakini, last time people would say traitors but now even traitors get honour, are held in high regard.

"Previously people would say traitors but these people really behave like traitors, asking foreigners to harm their own country. These people call themselves Malaysians, what kind of Malaysians are they?"

On Friday, Malaysiakini's former news editor Chong Yen Long said Malaysiakini received RM188,000 from the Media Development Loan Fund (MDLF), which is believed to be partly funded by Soros, the man widely blamed for the region's economic and financial crisis.

Chong claimed that this was mentioned by Malaysiakini chief executive officer Premesh Chandran at a company meeting on Feb 17 this year.

Premesh has denied Chong's allegation.

-- BERNAMA

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