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PM to close leadership symposium at UM as planned

SHAH ALAM, Sat. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad will close a leadership symposium at Universiti Malaya tomorrow as scheduled, despite claims that a demonstration by students was being planned to protest his visit.

"I will go... the university does not belong to them alone.

"I also have a right because if not for our efforts, they will not be able to study there... so don't think UM belongs to them."

Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president, was speaking at a Press conference shortly after opening the Selangor Umno's 10th convention.

Yesterday, fire razed the university's Dewan Tunku Canselor.

The authorities have not yet discounted it to be the work of arsonists.

It was reported that anti-government leaflets were being distributed to students in connection with the two-day event, "Simposium Penegasan Arah Tuju Idealisma Mahasiswa Di Alaf Baru".

About 3,000 students from 15 local universities and private institutions of higher learning, academicians, religious figure and prominent leaders are participating in the symposium, organised by Yayasan Penggerak Wawasan.

On the squabble between Pas and DAP over the former's plans to set up an Islamic state if the Opposition was to form the Government, Dr Mahathir said the incompatibility of both parties was well known.

"One side wants one thing while the other wants something else. Eventually, they will quarrel," he stated.

On contention by the Opposition that Barisan Nasional was manipulating the issue to create a further rift between Pas and DAP, Dr Mahathir said the Opposition could say whatever they liked.

"Since they say it is manipulated by BN, don't bother about it... let it go.

"The DAP should (then) allow Pas to set up an Islamic state where they will abolish all civil courts... then they can try Kit Siang (DAP chairman Lim Kit Siang) in the syariah court."

Dr Mahathir was also asked to comment on the re-appointment of Kofi Annan as the United Nations secretary-general, to which he said Malaysia supported the decision of the world's body.

"It is appropriate that he continues. We don't have any other candidate," he said.

On whether the secretary-general has performed well, Dr Mahathir felt any UN secretary-general would face difficulties because the decisions were made by the Security Council and powerful nations.

"So, it is difficult for him to do what he thinks is right. He has to do what other people instruct him to do," he said.

Annan was unanimously appointed yesterday by the UN General Assembly for a second five-year term, six months before his present term expires.

The Prime Minister also confirmed the appointment of former Umno information chief Datuk Yusof Nor as the new chairman of Felda.

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