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Mahathir-Puteri

AZALINA SHOULD NOT TAKE LEGAL ACTION, SAYS DR MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, May 1 (Bernama) -- Puteri Umno protem head Azalina Othman Said need not take legal action against a Malay tabloid for alleging that she is a lesbian, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"If you sue the person, he or she will come out with all kinds of accusation (in court) and it will come out in the press and at the end of it all, you will see that she is innocent but at that time you (Azalina) are finished.

"It is not always easy to sue... lots of things have been said about me. I know what they will do... they want to have the publicity and run down and pick up all kinds of things relevant or not," he said.

He said it was just a trick which could be used by an efficient lawyer where the court could be exploited for one's political gains.

"The purpose (of the allegation) is political because they (Azalina's enemies) see that she is coming up, she is immediately accused. This is not merely an accusation but a way of throwing mud at people and thinking (that) you are safe because you can hide behind the courts," he told reporters after attending the Workers' Day 2002 gathering for the public sector at Intan, here today.

In view of all these things Azalina need not take legal action against the tabloid, said the Prime Minister when asked to comment on the report by the tabloid two weeks ago alleging that she had homosexual relations with one of her subordinates.

"Don't take legal action. I too don't want to take legal action. There are various allegations saying my son has 90 companies, receives RM900,000 in salary every month...he becomes (company) director and does not get a single sen, he has to spend his money but he doesn't want to sue, he says he cannot be bothered with these people," he said.

Dr Mahathir said people who published such newspapers were those who were bankrupts, they had no other work but to seek cheap publicity.

"If the person is sued in court for libel, there are ways of discrediting the other party further. I feel that such people is totally not eligible to be given a licence to publish a newspaper," he said.

When asked on the street demonstration by a non-governmental organisation from Jalan Tuanku Abdul Rahman to the Kuala Lumpur Tower this morning, he said it (demonstration) was not the way to resolve a problem.

"They should not take to the streets. This is not the way to resolve it. We give consideration, but you cannot expect whatever you want to be given to you," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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