

08/09/1997

Anwar recites pantun to express sadness over poison-pen letters

UMNO deputy president Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim recited two pantun to express his sadness and regret over the spate of poison-pen letters circulated recently slandering him.

Anwar said even though it was not the first time that poison-pen letters were written about him, this time "it is too much".

Making an impassioned, repeated plea to those responsible for the letters to cease doing so, Anwar, who is Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister, said: "Stop it, stop it (sudah-lah). We have a lot of work to finish, more important things to do, a bigger agenda ... there's a lot of work ahead of us.

"Enough is enough. We have so much more on the agenda. We must handle the economy carefully, consolidate our finances and strengthen ourselves politically.

"Let's not demean ourselves to the lowest level of God's creation.

"As a person, of course I feel something ... a little sad. That was why I made a police report on Aug 15," he said in his winding-up address at the Umno general assembly yesterday.

He thanked party president and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for his support throughout the time he went through this sadness and also to delegates who had shown much sympathy for him.

He also found much strength in his wife, Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Ismail, for her patience and understanding. He said he also found strength and support from other family members and friends.

Recalling Dr Mahathir's advice to him, Anwar told delegates that the Prime Minister had told him to be patient, adding that he (Dr Mahathir) had also gone through the same treatment, too.

Anwar said Dr Mahathir had told him that he (Dr Mahathir) himself have been slandered several times including that he had a Chinese wife in Singapore.

Anwar said that he suspected those who indulged in writing and circulating poison-pen letters probably did so because they had the impression that he was doing it, too.

Later, at a Press conference, asked whether the Government was planning to take any action against those responsible for the letters, Dr Mahathir said the Government could not disclose the identities of those behind the poison-pen letter.

"Although we know the culprits behind this letter, we do not have enough evidence to reveal their identities," he said.

At the same Press conference, Anwar said the matter should be considered closed.