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Anwar - letter

ONSLAUGHT OF POISON PEN LETTERS AGAINST ANWAR AFTER ACTING AS PM

SHAH ALAM, Aug 25 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim revealed today there has been an onslaught of poison pen letters against him in a "most concerted, well-organised and well-orchestrated" effort to shorten his political career following his stint as acting Prime Minister two months ago.

The Deputy Prime Minister said that since his relationship with Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was excellent and there had been no problems during the period he acted as Prime Minister, certain people felt that they had to "create something."

"There have been seven, eight letters from various people ... some signed, some unsigned," Anwar told reporters after launching the 1997 Women's Day celebration at Bangunan Sultan Aziz Shah here.

He was commenting on the revelation by the Prime Minister yesterday that he (PM) had received a letter alleging Anwar's involvement in a sex scandal.

Dr Mahathir described the letter as "fitnah" (slandorous) and a politically-motivated attempt to sabotage Anwar's chances to succeed him as Prime Minister.

Anwar said he felt sad that this should happen as he had been strong on the issue of poison-pen letters as evidenced in his public pronouncements.

He said it was clear that the attack against him was politically motivated but it was difficult to obtain proof to implicate those involved.

Asked whether he planned to take further action, Anwar said he was quite reluctant to pursue the matter and agreed with Dr Mahathir's view that it was unlikely that people would believe such absurd and ridiculous allegations.

"As the Prime Minister said yesterday, the writer has denied parts of the letter and retracted other parts ... as such it is difficult for us to pursue the matter.

" It is not important who I suspect. What is important is that this matter has been cleared. As the Prime Minister said yesterday, I don't think this matter should be prolonged," he said.

Asked whether he felt the attempt to discredit him was a concerted effort to shorten his political career, Anwar said:

"Yes ... because it came in no small measure. It came like an onslaught ... seven, eight letters implicating umpteen people with me. This is serious."

Asked about his family's reaction, Anwar said his family had taken it reasonably well since this was not the first time this sort of thing had happened.

Whenever there was a (UMNO) general assembly, party election or general election, there would be such letters.

"This is nothing new. However, this time it is the most concerted, well-organised and well-orchestrated," he said. -- Bernama

RAZ SJ