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PM: An attempt to sabotage Anwar's chances as successor

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SHAH ALAM, Sun. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad described accusations of a sex scandal involving his deputy, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, as fitnah (slanderous) and politically motivated.

Dr Mahathir said the accusations were the work of groups who were out to prevent Anwar from succeeding him as Prime Minister.

They do this by making "ridiculous" accusations against Anwar, Dr Mahathir added.

He was asked to comment on talk that the Deputy Prime Minister was involved in a sex scandal. The Prime Minister had earlier flagged off the inaugural 300km Merdeka Race carnival at the Shah Alam race circuit.

Dr Mahathir said he believed that the accusations were attempts to sabotage a certain person.

Asked whether it was true that he received a letter containing the allegations, Dr Mahathir said:

"Yes, but it is too absurd to be believed. Even the writer has said the contents are not true.

"There is no evidence at all. Just the usual lies."

Dr Mahathir, who is also Home Minister, said the police had investigated the matter and concluded that there was no case.

"I received a report on this and I am quite satisfied with the report."

He said although the writer admitted writing the letter, it was dictated by someone else.

"Yes, the person wrote the letter. Somebody dictated the letter. The letter was written in a language beyond the capacity of one of the writers.

"Obviously, somebody has been moving around and making these allegations for certain groups. It is purely political. There is no truth in it.

"The person who was supposed to have written the letter later decided that there was no truth.

"Of course it relates to some events but it was interpreted the wrong way. For example, if you see somebody going somewhere you can always say that he is going to do certain things but you don't actually know.

"But for political purposes it is good of course to make full use of such things.

"For example, I always take pictures with some girls next to me but this does not mean that I have an affair with the girls. Everybody wants to take pictures with me."

Dr Mahathir said these allegations were directed at Anwar because certain people did not want him to become his successor.

"People think that he is likely to succeed me. An attempt is being made to paint him black so that he won't succeed. That's all."

However, Dr Mahathir expressed confidence that the allegations would not damage Anwar's reputation.

"I don't think it will damage (his reputation)... unless somebody is very stupid to believe such ridiculous accusations against him."

He said the matter was now closed.

On whether he had met Anwar to ask him about the allegations, Dr Mahathir said:

"Don't ask me that. What I do is my business. But I know as much about this thing... you don't have to ask me."

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