

Plot to topple Dr M exposed

S 3. 10. 98

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Anwar 'wanted to win next Umno election'

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KUALA LUMPUR Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad exposed a conspiracy masterminded by Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim to topple him despite them being "good friends."

He said Anwar, while remaining close to him, had plotted a move against him to ensure victory in next year's party elections.

Dr Mahathir said Anwar had claimed that he had kept certain items abroad detailing the wrongdoings of other leaders.

"I am confident that should he contest in the election, he would make use of such items for his own gains," he told a press conference after a meet-the-people gathering here yesterday.

Answering a question about claims that Anwar paid at least 90 division leaders to support him in next year's contest, Dr Mahathir said he had yet to clarify the matter.

However, he said he was now clear that Anwar had plotted to topple him although he did not know this before.

"People told me about this but I did not believe

them. Now I am clear about this," he added.

He said Anwar had made preparations for his victory by placing his men or supporters at Umno divisions.

To a question whether the plot began at the recent Umno assembly when the issue of cronyism and nepotism was raised, Dr Mahathir said he did not pay much attention to it.

"They accepted my speech quite well and acknowledged my explanations," he added.

He said when the delegates accepted his speech, it looked as if their plan did not succeed.

Dr Mahathir said Anwar had also confessed that he influenced former Youth chief Datuk Ahmad Zahid Hamidi to make the speech.

"I think Zahid is aware now that he had been used by Anwar," he added.

To a question on Zahid's resignation, Dr Mahathir said Zahid had informed him of his intention to resign.

"He told me in a letter that he would not involve himself in any more reformation activities. However, he wants to remain as a member and division chief," he added.