

18/09/1998

`Allegations against me were fabricated'

KUANTAN, Thurs. - Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim repeated tonight that allegations against him, which included sexual improprieties, were fabricated and said only people "with the highest level of authority" were capable of doing so.

Anwar said these people feared him because his popularity had been growing as a result of him championing the cause of the poor like building more low-cost houses, and initiating the Islamic Bank and International Islamic University.

Their worst fear, he said, was the amended Anti-Corruption Act which he tabled in Parliament last year.

Anwar also declared that he would have mounted a challenge in next year's Umno elections if he was still a party member. "That was why they sacked me from the party," he said.

When he was Umno deputy president, there was widespread talk that he was priming himself to challenge Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for the president's post, forcing him to deny it repeatedly.

The last was when he spoke at the opening of the RM35 million 21-storey Menara Umno in Penang last month. Anwar had said rumours that he would challenge Dr Mahathir were "baseless and illogical".

"I want to show my loyalty and love to the Prime Minister. I have been in the party with Dr Mahathir for a long time. I am indebted to him personally and I am repeating my loyalty pledge to him ...

"Compared to him, I am a mere student. I know it is impossible to fight a teacher, what more a father," Anwar had said.

Anwar was removed as Deputy Prime Minister on Sept 2 and subsequently expelled from Umno for alleged moral misconduct.

He said he would leave it to his lawyers to defend him on charges of him being immoral while he would continue to fight against injustice in the country.

Claiming that support for his reformation movement was gaining momentum, Anwar said the supporters included professionals especially lawyers and doctors.

He was referring to statements by several Umno supreme council members that he should concentrate on defending allegations against him instead of focusing on his so-called reformation movement.

"I will continue with my struggle to bring about changes in the country," he said when speaking at Perkampungan Peramu Maju, about 10km from here.

Also present were his wife Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Ismail, Negri Sembilan Umno Youth chief Ruslan Kassim and his Penang counterpart Abdul Rahim Ghouse.

It is part of Anwar's nationwide tour to counter allegations made against him and to rally the people to his reformation movement.

Anwar said if he was detained by police, Dr Wan Azizah would carry on with the struggle.

"I believe my detention will only be a temporary setback," he said.

He said he had been wondering why police had yet to pick him up although it had been two weeks since he was sacked from the Government and the party.

"Investigation started six months ago, with it going full-scale three months ago," he said, adding that it was obvious that police could not

gather enough evidence.

Anwar also hit out at certain quarters who tried to pit him against the police.

"I have nothing against the force. I am only pleading for them to be fair in their investigation," he said.

He said when he was in the Government, he did a lot for the welfare of the police especially in providing them with living quarters.

Earlier when asked by reporters whether he would remain active in politics, Anwar said: "It is going to be difficult. I will return with the support from the people."

After his 70-minute speech, Anwar left for Kuala Terengganu where he is scheduled attend another gathering tomorrow evening. He said the Kelantan State Government had also allowed him to use the Stadium Sultan Mohamad for his meeting with the people on Saturday night.

"I am planning a second phase of my roadshow and this one will be on a bigger scale," he added.

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