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`Anwar had conspired to bring down PM'

Sarban Singh

SEREMBAN, Sun. - Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohamad Isa Abdul Samad said today Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim had conspired to bring down Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad although the former Deputy Prime Minister had claimed that there was a high-level conspiracy against him.

Mohamad Isa said the claim was a fabrication by Anwar who had failed to answer allegations of sexual misconduct against him.

"We did not hear terms like crony capitalism or nepotism previously until Anwar spoke in the United States prior to this year's Umno general assembly.

"At first, we thought Anwar was referring to other countries but when he admitted that he had gone through Umno Youth chief Datuk Ahmad Zahid Hamid's speech which the latter delivered at the last Umno general assembly, it is now clear that Anwar had conspired to bring down Dr Mahathir," he said.

Mohamad Isa was speaking to reporters after opening the 13th annual general meeting of the former graduates of the Malacca Malay Teachers' Training College today.

Ahmad Zahid raised the issue of nepotism and cronyism at the recent Umno general assembly which prompted party president Dr Mahathir to make public the list of government contracts tendered out in recent years.

"I have always known that there is someone behind Ahmad Zahid who is making use of him.

"Otherwise, Ahmad Zahid would have not been brave enough to raise the issue at the Umno general assembly," he said, adding that Anwar's sacking from Umno was a blessing in disguise as the party did not wish to have leaders who were involved in sexual improprieties.

Mohamad Isa said even a section of the local media was influenced by Anwar and was trumpeting Ahmad Zahid's calls to bring an end to nepotism and cronyism.

He said although Dr Mahathir had been informed of Anwar's moral misconduct earlier, the party president had never believed the allegations until recently.

Mohamad Isa said Dr Mahathir had so much faith in Anwar that he had reaffirmed his decision to appoint Anwar as his successor weeks before his dismissal.

"Dr Mahathir was informed way back in 1993 of Anwar's moral misconduct but he dismissed all these as a plot to bring down his deputy.

"Only after concluding his own investigations that Dr Mahathir is convinced that Anwar is involved in such immoral activities," he said.

Mohamad Isa said when allegations of nepotism and cronyism were first raised, many thought that this would lead to the resignation of Dr Mahathir as party president.

"But when Dr Mahathir made public the list of those given government contracts at the Umno assembly, the issues of nepotism and cronyism were no longer raised," he said.

Mohamad Isa said Anwar had conspired to weaken Dr Mahathir's control over the party by raising these issues.

"To me, a true leader like Dr Mahathir will always prevail. But there are some leaders who try to hoodwink the people into believing that they are the true leaders.

"Such leaders will not be around for long as the rakyat will know who

they really are," he said.

Mohamad Isa said Umno members who still showed sympathy for Anwar should make their stand.

"As Umno members, we should have undivided loyalty towards the party. Leaders always come and go.

"But if one cannot accept the decision of the Umno supreme council to expel Anwar, my advice to them is to resign," he said, adding that such members should not wait to be expelled and then seek sympathy.

He said one could not be an Umno member and at the same time supported Anwar.

Mohamad Isa said it was improper for Anwar to attack Umno, Dr Mahathir's leadership and the Government as he (Anwar) had been in the system for many years.

He said Anwar had also perfected the art of pre-empting police and court actions to his advantage.

"All these are to fool the people. But when two people admitted at the Kuala Lumpur Sessions Court yesterday that they were sodomised by Anwar, the truth is slowly but surely coming out now," he said.

Mohamad Isa said Anwar had always avoided addressing allegations of sexual improprieties against him but had instead spoken about introducing reforms.

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