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Mahathir-Anwar

ANWAR'S ACCUSATIONS AN ACT OF DESPERATION, SAYS MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 20 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today his former deputy, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, is now desperate that he has to come out with proposals such as asking the prime minister to step down.

"I can understand his feelings. He has been dismissed, he cannot dismiss me. So, he asks for my resignation," the prime minister said when asked how he felt about Anwar calling on him to resign.

Speaking at a news conference after visiting the Main Press Centre (MPC) of the 16th Commonwealth Games, here, Dr Mahathir said it was entirely logical for Anwar to ask for his resignation.

The prime minister described Anwar as "a man in desperation (who) will make all kinds of accusations."

He said the main thing was for Anwar, who was dismissed from the cabinet on Sept 2 and expelled from Umno a day later, to prove all his allegations.

Dr Mahathir said the fact remained that Anwar had been breaking the law and the law had not come down on him (yet).

"I am quite sure that if he is arrested, he will go through the normal process of law," he said.

Asked by a foreign reporter as to when he started suspecting Anwar's "homosexual behaviour", Dr Mahathir said the element of surprise in the allegations against Anwar was fading "because I have now accepted the fact that he behaves in this way."

"At first of course I told the people who brought this (the allegations against Anwar) to my attention that they were really trying to get rid of him (Anwar)," said Dr Mahathir.

The prime minister said that after some time he had to take action against Anwar as there was "too strong evidence" which he (Dr Mahathir) had to accept.

"So, now I think I am beyond being surprised. I think this is something that apparently he indulges in, to my regret," Dr Mahathir said.

Asked by another foreign reporter whether he believed in his heart what he had read in the local newspapers today about the sodomy charges against Anwar's adopted brother and friend yesterday, Dr Mahathir said he believed they were true.

Anwar's adopted brother, Sukma Darmawan, 37, and his friend and former speechwriter, Dr Munawar A. Anees, 51, were jailed six months each by the Sessions Court yesterday after they pleaded guilty to committing acts of gross indecency by allowing themselves to be sodomised by Anwar.

Dr Mahathir said: "Nobody is going to come out and confess to something that is going to be very damaging to themselves."

He said he was quite sure that Anwar (when he was the DPM) had felt quite safe because he (Anwar) was under the impression that these people (Sukma and Dr Munawar) would never admit to something that they would be very ashamed off.

"But as it is, they (Sukma and Dr Munawar) have made this admission. So, I think nobody in his right mind would want to damage himself by making such a confession," said the prime minister.

Asked on Anwar's allegation that Sukma and Dr Munawar were "tortured" into confessing, Dr Mahathir said Anwar could verify whether they had been tortured.

He said anyone could ask Sukma and Dr Munawar if they were tortured

into making a confession.

"This is an allegation that he (Anwar) is going to make throughout. He is going to make allegations that the whole government machinery, almost one million people, have conspired to do him in," Dr Mahathir said.

The prime minister said it was up to the people to decide whether they wanted to believe Anwar or the one million people working for the government.

Asked when Anwar would be arrested, he said the due process of law would have to take place.

"I am quite sure the people who are implementing this thing know their jobs. They will do what is required of them," said Dr Mahathir.

He said many people were very curious about the allegations against Anwar because of his previous position as deputy prime minister.

"They want to hear what he is saying. I mean, a lot of people are very curious. Reporters are curious. I don't think you are his supporters but I am quite sure you will want to go and hear him. Quite interesting," he said.

Asked if it was inevitable that Anwar would be arrested, Dr Mahathir told the foreign reporter who had asked the question that he was entitled to his suspicion.

"As far as I am concerned, if the thing is done that is right, then it should be done," he said.

Dr Mahathir said it was not for him to decide when Anwar would be arrested and charged in court. "If they (the police) have the evidence and they can charge him, I am quite sure they will do so," he said.

He said that if the authorities had wanted to arrest Anwar after the Kuala Lumpur Commonwealth Games as claimed by Anwar, they would not have charged Sukma and Dr Munawar in court during the Games.

He said the foreign media should not be too suspicious of the actions taken by the authorities in dealing with the case involving Anwar.

During the news conference which was mostly packed with foreign reporters, the prime minister was also asked how long he wanted Anwar to serve his sentence.

Dr Mahathir replied that he was not enjoying the events that had taken place since Anwar's sacking.

"It is not my nature to gloat...I don't enjoy. I wish he (Anwar) hadn't done this," he said.

Asked about Anwar's plan to lead a rally at Merdeka Square at 4pm today, Dr Mahathir said he was not concerned at all.

"He's been telling the world that he has been prevented from doing this and that but he has been holding rallies which are illegal. He never asked for permission.

"When he was in the government, he objected to people holding illegal rallies. Now that he is out of the government, he thinks that he is privileged to hold rallies against the law," Dr Mahathir said.

Anwar claimed that he had been invited by several organisations to be at the square today, at about the same time Queen Elizabeth II will be at prayers at a nearby church.

Dr Mahathir said Anwar had been saying that he would be arrested under the Internal Security Act but the authorities had not arrested him.

"But of course that has not been noticed and a lot of people think that people in the opposition have got a lot of privileges and people in the government do not have," he said.

-- BERNAMA
ES JK