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Anwar's call reflects desperation: Mahathir

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's call for him to resign reflects the former Deputy Prime Minister's desperation.

"In his desperation, he has to come up with something ... I understand his feelings. He has been dismissed. Since he cannot dismiss me he asks for my resignation. I think it is entirely logical," Dr Mahathir said.

"Since he (Anwar) cannot dismiss me, so it is entirely logical for him to ask for my resignation," Dr Mahathir told local and foreign journalists after visiting the main press centre of the Commonwealth Games at Mint Hotel in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Anwar who was removed as Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister before being expelled from Umno early this month for alleged low moral conduct, treason and corruption.

His adopted brother, Sukma Darmawan, 37, and friend and sometimes speech writer Dr Munawar A. Anees, 51, pleaded guilty separately in court on Saturday to charges of allowing Anwar to perform sodomy on them.

Anwar has denied these allegations. Last week at rallies in Kuala Terengganu and Batu Pahat, he had called on Dr Mahathir to resign.

"It was entirely logical for him (Anwar) to ask for my resignation. He is a man in desperation who will make all kinds of accusations," Dr Mahathir said.

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

The two men were jailed six months each by the Sessions Court for committing the crime.

On Anwar's allegation that Sukma and Munawar may have been "tortured" into confessing, Dr Mahathir said Anwar can verify whether they had been tortured.

In fact, he said anyone can 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 accuse that the whole government machinery, almost one million people, have conspired to do him in," he added.

On whether Anwar would be arrested, Dr Mahathir said the due process of law would have to take place.

"If (the police) have the evidence and they can charge him, I am quite sure they will do so."

Bernamea reports: The people will not allow Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to be defeated in his Kubang Pasu parliamentary constituency in the next general election especially by someone like Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim who is involved in various cases, said former president of Parti Melayu Semangat 46 Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah said yesterday.

He said Dr Mahathir had served well not only his constituents but also the country and the world.

"... no way someone like Anwar who is involved in many cases could ever be more influential than the PM, and it is not possible that the PM will be defeated," he said when asked to comment on Anwar's intention to contest in the parliamentary constituency in the next election.

Speaking to reporters after attending a luncheon organised by Ipoh Timur Umno head Datuk Yahaya Shafie, in Ipoh, he said no one could be assured of a 100 per cent support in any constituency as there was bound to be

opposition since Malaysia practised parliamentary democracy.

But, he said he was confident that Dr Mahathir would win easily in defending his seat in the next election.

On the case of two men sentenced by the Kuala Lumpur Sessions Court for six months each after pleading guilty to committing an act of gross indecency by allowing Anwar to sodomise them, Razaleigh said that whatever denial Anwar made the people would believe the court more.

Razaleigh also did not rule out the possibility of contesting for the deputy president's post which fell vacant following Anwar's sacking in Umno elections next year.

"I'll wait and see. I have contested many times and if Umno members want me to, I'll think about it," he said.

But for now, he said he had no such plan.

Also present were Umno Supreme Council member Datuk Ibrahim Ali and former Umno Youth leader Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Thamby Chik.

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