

13/09/1998

Dr M: The truth will finally prevail (HL)

Ashraf Abdullah

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - As sacked Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim took his case on a roadshow today, the Prime Minister said the truth will eventually prevail.

Anwar left Kuala Lumpur for his Permatang Pauh constituency in Penang this morning and later went to Alor Star.

Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said he was confident that when the case was heard in court, "a lot more things will be exposed" and the people would believe the charges.

Dr Mahathir was speaking to reporters after visiting the 16th Commonwealth Games Corporate Hospitality Village in Bukit Jalil.

Asked what he thought of several Umno leaders and members, who were still seen with Anwar and supporting his reform movement, Dr Mahathir said:

"We will wait and see. Up to now, they still don't believe what we have said. But in the end when there is a trial, a lot of things will be exposed and then they will believe us. The truth will prevail."

To a question on whether the Opposition could take advantage of the issue surrounding Anwar because there were Umno members who did not believe that Anwar had indulged in immoral activities, the Prime Minister replied:

"We have to see whether it will bring positive or negative effects to the Opposition. Those who don't want to believe (Anwar's moral misconduct) are only deceiving themselves. We will not take such action unless we have enough evidence.

"The supreme council decided unanimously to expel him, although the council also comprises members who are known to be Anwar's supporters. Even they agreed to Anwar's expulsion."

Anwar, who was sacked as Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister last Wednesday and expelled from Umno a day later, had repeatedly said that he was a victim of conspiracy at the highest level.

Dr Mahathir said Umno had no plans, as yet, to act against members who appeared to be supporting Anwar.

"But surely it will affect them when we re-evaluate their loyalty to Umno."

He said he was confident that Anwar and his group would not be able to drag other Umno members to join his reformation movement.

He added that members who were seen with Anwar were either those who had personal problems with Umno or those who were not satisfied with the party.

Dr Mahathir who is also Home Minister was asked whether he was concerned that Anwar's roadshow might disrupt public order.

"If it disrupts public order, we will take action. But if it is peaceful, we will not take any action," he said.

Dr Mahathir also described Anwar as an opportunist, saying that while he was in the Government, he criticised those who used the mosques for political purposes, but now he himself was doing it.

On Umno Youth chief Datuk Ahmad Zahid Hamidi who had refused to resign despite calls from a majority of Youth exco members for him to relinquish his post, Dr Mahathir said:

"He is doing exactly what Anwar did. He knows that if the decision on his position is left to the supreme council, there is a possibility that

he will be expelled. So, he can use this to blame the council.

"His strategy is the same as Anwar's. Anwar should have resigned but he didn't and wanted us to expel him. When we expelled him, he called it injustice."

Dr Mahathir said Zahid should have resigned.

(END)