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Ex-DPM says some party leaders afraid of him

KUALA TERENGGANU, Fri. - Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said today that as Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's deputy he knew that the Prime Minister did not plan to retire this year and the only way to make him go was for the people to oust him.

He said he doubted the statement by Dr Mahathir that he planned to step down as Prime Minister this year.

He added he knew that this would not happen because he (Anwar) was then the Deputy Prime Minister and was very close to Dr Mahathir and was meeting him daily.

"As his former deputy, I know that the only way to remove Dr Mahathir as Prime Minister is by the people ousting him."

Anwar said he was not blaming Umno (for his removal as deputy president), but he blamed two or three Umno leaders.

"If Umno is to have a safe future and to ensure that the people do not reject the party, Umno must reject leaders who are no longer fit to become leaders."

He was speaking to a crowd at a house at Jalan Hakim 1, Pantai Batu Buruk. The gathering was hosted by Abdul Rahman Yusof, a former committee member of the Kuala Terengganu Umno division.

Anwar earlier performed Friday prayers at the Tengku Intan Tengah Zaharah mosque at Kuala Ibai, but did not speak due to the standing order by the State Religious Affairs Department preventing unauthorised individuals from making public speeches within the compound of mosques in the State.

Anwar said he knew the identity of those who accused him of being a corrupt person. But he continued to avoid confronting the allegations of sexual improprieties against him.

"They can check my properties. I don't have an account outside the country. But tonight in Kota Baru, I will reveal the identity of the people who fled with money overseas. That is why they wanted to shut my mouth. But I will reveal bit by bit," he said.

On the accusation that he had received RM60 million from Datuk S. Nallakaruppan, he said there was no proof, no charge, no cheque and cash (for that amount), who received it or where the money went to.

"If there is no such proof, why don't the police check on who actually took the money. There is no Finance Minister in the world who had an income like me."

He added people feared that he would become the next Prime Minister because then the "dirty works" would be stopped.

"Therefore, they killed my political career. They fear that if I rise, all their dirty deeds will be revealed. That is why I am not afraid."

He said the local electronic and print media have not published his statements because they have become "the tools for lying".

Anwar added he would continue with his struggle for reform and, if at any time he was arrested, his wife Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail would succeed him.

In Kota Baru tonight, Anwar claimed that Dr Mahathir had lost the support of the people and thus, should step down honourably.

Addressing a gathering at the Stadium Sultan Mohamad IV, he also claimed that he had been asked by some Umno branch leaders in Kubang Pasu to contest in the parliamentary seat now held by Dr Mahathir in the next

general election.

Anwar added that in the event he was prevented from contesting in the next polls, Dr Wan Azizah would be fielded in Kubang Pasu.

As in previous speeches while on his tour of the country, Anwar said Dr Wan Azizah would carry on the struggle if he was detained.

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