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Mokhtar-Mahathir

MAHATHIR WOULD HAVE RETIRED AFTER KL`98, SAYS WAN MOKHTAR

KEMAMAN, Sept 15 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad intended to step down after this month's 16th Commonwealth Games but had to cancel his plan because of the morality problem of his would be successor, according to Terengganu Umno liaison committee chief Tan Sri Wan Mokhtar Ahmad.

"The prime minister has deep trust in then deputy prime minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim to the extent of appointing Anwar as acting prime minister for two months while he went on leave," Wan Mokhtar told a meet-the-people session in Kemasik here last night.

Wan Mokhtar, who is also Menteri Besar, explained to the gathering current issues relating to the economic crisis and Anwar's expulsion from Umno by the party's Supreme Council a day after he was sacked as deputy prime minister and finance minister on Sept 2.

The state assemblyman for Kemasik Datuk Abu Bakar Ali and Kemaman Umno division information chief Hj Harun Hassan were among those present.

Wan Mokhtar, who is chairman of the committee of Menteris Besar and Chief Ministers, said Dr Mahathir chose not to cause others embarrassment and instead preferred a forum like the court, to deal with the issue relating to allegations against Anwar.

Wan Mokhtar said without concrete proof the prime minister would not have taken such a decision like he did against someone he has been grooming and nurturing for the past 16 years.

Wan Mokhtar said Anwar, who he said has been maintaining a strong religious image and proficiency to discuss religion and deliver sermons during Friday prayers, should have been more discerning in choosing his friends.

Islam, Wan Mokhtar said, spells out what sort of friends a Muslim should have because friends, to some extent, can influence one's personality.

Wan Mokhtar said in the context of the allegations against Anwar, the truth would eventually prevail and this was for the court to determine.

-- BERNAMA

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