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'Opportunists out to exploit cronyism, nepotism issue'

KUANTAN, Sun. - Certain people are using issues relating to cronyism and nepotism to cause a split between the Prime Minister and his deputy, Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk Fauzi Abdul Rahman said today.

He said this was a deliberate attempt by people with their own agenda in wanting to see a fight between Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim for their own benefit.

"There are some people in the country who are unhappy with the political scene and they intend to make use of the cronyism and nepotism issue to create political instability."

Fauzi was speaking to reporters after attending the ground-breaking ceremony of Sekolah Jenis Kebangsaan (C) Pooi Ming today.

The terms cronyism and nepotism were often used by the West to refer to situations in Indonesia to create unrest, he said.

"This could be the main cause in bringing down (Indonesia's) leader.

"However in Malaysia, the terms cronyism and nepotism might be misused and I have contacted Umno Youth chief Datuk Zahid Hamidi to get a clearer picture on a statement that he made.

"Zahid told me he was referring only to specific things which did not involve the leaders ... "However, the cronyism and nepotism issue has been blown up and become common words for many people, including opportunists out to create political instability."

He said what was happening in the country now was that there were some who were unhappy with the political scene.

"However, I do not believe there is friction between our Prime Minister and his deputy because as a Deputy Minister at the Prime Minister's Department, I see the close relationship between the two.

"Every day I see them meeting to discuss government policies and in every meeting I attended I also noticed that Dr Mahathir showed respect for Anwar's points of view and vice versa.

"So I feel those trying to create tension between the Prime Minister and his deputy should look for something better to do because, believe me, there is no ill-feelings between Dr Mahathir and Anwar."

On allegations that the Prime Minister and his deputy are having different views, Fauzi said it was only the perception of the public.

"For example when Mahathir says that we want the country to undergo rapid development while Anwar says the country needs more low-cost houses, a narrow-minded person would interpret the statements as contradictory.

"However, when we analyse the statements, it is obvious both leaders want the country to be rich and developed, so that the prosperity of the country could be enjoyed by all, including the low-income earners, because housing is a basic need for all."

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