

21 SEP 1998

Zahid-ISA

ZAHID AND FOUR ABIM LEADERS DETAINED UNDER ISA

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 21 (Bernama) -- Umno Youth chief Datuk Ahmad Zahid Hamidi and four leaders of the Islamic Youth Movement of Malaysia (Abim) were arrested today under the Internal Security Act (ISA), police said.

Zahid was picked up by police in Kota Kinabalu, Sabah, this morning, Director of Criminal Investigation Department Datuk Yaacob Mohamed Amin told reporters.

Yaacob said the four Abim leaders -- president Ahmad Azam Abdul Rahman, deputy president Mukhtar Redhuan, secretary-general Shaharuddin Badaruddin and vice president Abdul Halim Ismail -- were arrested at the Abim headquarters here.

All were detained under Section 73 (1) (a) of the ISA for threatening national security.

Yaacob said they were identified as "henchmen" of sacked Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim to carry out acts prejudicial to public order.

Anwar himself was arrested at his house here last night and police later said he has also been detained under the same section of the ISA.

The arrest of Anwar came hours after he led a huge rally at the National Mosque in yet another protest of his sacking on Sept 2 after being implicated in allegations of sexual misconduct.

The protesters later marched without Anwar to the official residence of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad where riot police prevented their advance using water cannons and tear gas.

Since his ouster, Anwar has been holding similars protests, mostly without police permits, in several parts of the country to deny the allegations which he said were a conspiracy to destroy his political career.

On today's arrests, Yaacob said: "We are investigating their role in the disturbances which broke out yesterday in Kuala Lumpur".

"More arrests are to be expected soon," Yaacob said.

Yesterday, another strong supporter of Anwar, Ruslan Kassim, who is Umno Youth head of Negeri Sembilan, was also arrested under the ISA.

Yaacob said Anwar's arrest under the ISA did not mean that police would discontinue investigations into allegations of sexual misconduct against Anwar contained in a book "50 Dalil Kenapa Anwar Tidak Boleh Jadi PM" (50 Reasons Why Anwar Cannot be Prime Minister).

"The probe will go on. We may press charges against Anwar at the right time," he said.

Asked if Anwar's wife, Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Ismail, was also courting arrest by her appearances at pro-Anwar rallies, the CID chief said if they were reasons to justify the arrest, the police would do it.

"If there are no reasons to arrest her, why should we do it. It will depend on the situation," he said.

-- BERNAMA

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