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Mahathir-conspiracy

ANWAR PLOTTED AGAINST OTHERS AS WELL, SAYS MAHATHIR

MELAKA, Aug 9 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said his jailed former deputy Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has long plotted to bring down national leaders, including himself, when Anwar was in the government.

While denying that Anwar was a victim of any conspiracy as alleged by the former deputy prime minister, Dr Mahathir said: "He is in fact the mastermind to bring down others. He is never the target of any plot by any one."

Anwar's disclosure that he had kept government documents abroad was proof that Anwar intended to use them for ulterior motives, Dr Mahathir said when addressing Melaka Barisan Nasional (BN) divisional as well youth and women leaders here today.

Dr Mahathir, who is also BN chairman, is on a two-day working visit to Melaka.

He said Anwar had now made statements of being in possession of an assortment of official letters and documents stashed away overseas so that he could list down one by one the government's alleged wrongdoings.

"What does this mean. This means that all the while that he was in the government, he had other job collecting these letters and keeping them for a motive... this means that he has a plot, he has plans to bring down those in government, including myself, and perhaps (International Trade and Industry Minister) Datuk Seri Rafidah Aziz as well as the others," he said.

Dr Mahathir said it seemed that when Anwar was in the government, he had not functioned as a member of the cabinet but as someone out to oust government leaders.

"And for this he was willing to collect confidential government letters," he said.

Dr Mahathir said these confidential letters were bound by the Official Secrets Act (OSA).

"We can't use official documents for purposes other than those determined by the government but he (Anwar) collected all these letters and stashed them away overseas to be used later against the government," he said.

Anwar is currently serving a six-year jail term since April this year upon conviction on four charges of corruption and is currently being tried for sodomy.

Dr Mahathir said it was unlikely that Anwar only began collecting the letters after he was charged in court because following that he was only allowed to take his personal effects from his former office.

Officers escorting him to his former office to collect his personal belongings made sure that he did not take along official documents, Dr Mahathir said.

Anwar was dismissed from the Cabinet as Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister on Sept 2 last year and expelled from Umno the next day.

"If he had been in possession of such documents, this meant that he had kept them and sent them abroad for safe-keeping to blackmail or bring down other government leaders," said the prime minister.

However, Dr Mahathir said, allegations of a political conspiracy involving him and his colleagues to bring down Anwar continued to be raised, including at his meetings with Umno leaders.

"Had we been conspiring, we can't have a conspiracy there and then and

let it take its own course..to execute a plot we have to meet people, hold secret meetings whisperingly and then only we can carry out the plot," said Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president.

Dr Mahathir said that he did not at all release any documents concerning Anwar as he did not keep them and whatever documents available now about his former deputy were obtained from the police.

"And we now know from documents still in government possession that Anwar had done a lot of things when he was minister which actually showed that he was insincere and had not been truthful to the administration.. he is the one practising cronyism and nepotism," said Dr Mahathir.

The prime minister said Anwar had extended facilities to friends in return for their support.

Dr Mahathir earlier held a closed door meeting with the Melaka Umno liaison committee.

-- BERNAMA

TIM RYN