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Dr M: To execute a conspiracy against Anwar is well-nigh impossible

PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said yesterday he never conspired to overthrow his former deputy, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, dismissing such accusations as "nonsense".

"I never conspired against anyone including against other former Deputy Prime Ministers, Tengku Razaleigh (Hamzah) and other Umno leaders who fell out or were dropped. On the contrary, I became a victim of a conspiracy to topple me," Dr Mahathir, who is also the Umno president said in his address at the opening of the three-day Umno general assembly at Dewan Merdeka of the Putra World Trade Centre in Kuala Lumpur.

Dr Mahathir said to conspire what he had been accused of doing "was not something that is easy to carry out in secrecy" as many people would have to be involved in it.

"I have to get co-operation from many police officers, prosecuting officers including public prosecutors, many judges, many men and women who became Anwar's victims, all Menteri Besar and Chief Ministers, all supreme council members and many others who would have to be in the know if this conspiracy is to succeed."

Dr Mahathir said it was impossible for this conspiracy not to be public knowledge months before Anwar was sacked given that in Malaysia where secrets were hard to keep, where poison pen letters in the Internet were common.

"To hide a plot involving lots of people comprising drivers, certain women, high ranking police officers, the Attorney-General's Chambers and the Judiciary is impossible."

Dr Mahathir said such a large conspiracy would surely be exposed and spread widely months before anything takes place because "conspiracies take a long time to plan and for them to obtain the co-operation of many who must be involved.

"Conspiracies cannot happen instantly," he said, adding that no one spoke and no poison pen letter written to expose this conspiracy.

Dr Mahathir said until the day Anwar was expelled, there was no news on him working to stop Anwar from becoming Prime Minister.

On the other hand, he added, it was public knowledge that he had named Anwar as his successor until the last moment.

"Because of the belief that Anwar would succeed me, many officers, Menteri Besar and party leaders at all levels did not dare question any actions or orders made by Anwar.

"All were afraid of being victimised when Anwar becomes Prime Minister."

Dr Mahathir said it could not be denied that allegations against Anwar were difficult to accept.

"As someone who appears to be pious, who can pass off as an `imam' and who delivers sermons, is he capable of despicable acts as charged in court? Is it not impossible that all police charges and actions were plots initiated by the Prime Minister against Anwar becoming the Prime Minister?"

Dr Mahathir said confusion and lack of belief against accusations towards Anwar were understandable because he himself did not believe a report he received in 1993 on Anwar's misdemeanours.

He still did not believe the accusations against Anwar by Ummi Hafilda Ali and Azizan Abu Bakar of unnatural acts contained in a letter to him.

In fact, he said he was relieved when police told him that both Ummi and

Azizan retracted their accusations.

He said he only believed the truth of the allegations when the police, after preliminary investigations on the 50 Dalil book, subsequent to the police report he made himself, reported to him that there was some truth in the allegations in the book.

Dr Mahathir said the police gave a clear explanation that he could no longer reject the allegations.

"But to convince myself that there were no ill-intentions by anyone against Anwar, I called a few people mentioned in the police report for me to interview. After that I could no longer deny the truth of the allegations.

"If I, who had obtained proof and explanation from the police then, could doubt the truth of the allegations against Anwar, what more those who merely obtained the news through newspapers or explanation from other people."

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