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Many more who benefited from Anwar's patronage still maintain business interests

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - The unidentified businessmen mentioned by Umno president and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad yesterday were not the only ones who had benefited from Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's patronage.

There are many more who continue to maintain their business interests even after Anwar had lost his job as Deputy Prime Minister and his position as deputy Umno president.

They are involved in various businesses ranging from media, property and manufacturing to fast food, banking and finance.

On Saturday, Dr Mahathir had said that a crony of a national leader had amassed wealth of more than RM230 million.

Dr Mahathir said he knew that many of Anwar's cronies had plenty of money as they had to declare their assets to the Prime Minister.

The allegations of such patronage were also highlighted at last year's Umno general assembly.

At that time, the then Umno Youth head Datuk Ahmad Zahid Hamidi alleged that Umno's political powers would be eroded and its struggle for the Malays would come to an end if negative elements like nepotism and cronyism were allowed to prevail.

This prompted Dr Mahathir to make public lists of names of people who benefited from the Government's privatisation programme, including Zahid himself.

He said the lists of beneficiaries of privatised projects and share allocations were released not only to show the extent of their distribution but also to stop sinister suspicions concerning them.

It has also been reported that some of Anwar's cronies had assets worth millions and interest in hundreds of companies, some listed on the Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange.

In December, it was reported in the media that two former aides and several senior politicians allied to Anwar had more than 300 companies, some listed on the local bourse, to their credit.

A Registrar of Companies listing obtained by the media showed that one of Anwar's cronies had interests in 112 companies, including some listed on the KLSE.

Some of the companies were property-based, as well as those involved in automobile, finance, airlines and education.

The crony was also listed as a shareholder of 48 companies with shareholdings ranging from a nominal one share to more than five million units.

Another aide, an MP, is still the director and/or shareholder of more than 100 companies. He is chairman of a bank and still has five listed companies to his credit.

Companies in his stable are involved in various activities including plantation, construction, building materials, manufacturing, telecommunications, forestry, property development and management.

Another Umno Youth leader, who fled the country following Anwar's arrest, was a director and/or shareholder of more than 40 companies. The companies were involved in financial services, construction, telecommunications and retailing.

Another of Anwar's cronies, a State Assemblyman, was listed as a

director of 80 companies, including several KLSE-listed companies. He was also executive chairman of a fast food restaurant. His other corporate entities include companies with interests in the property sector, rubber products, industrial, fast food, construction and steel.

Another Anwar ally was identified as director of 53 companies including several listed entities. Among the companies associated with the individual were companies with interests, among others, in the automobile industry, securities, travel and tours and industrial sector. The crony is also a State Assemblyman in Penang.

He was also chairman of several companies, including a consortium, which was one of the four appointed by the Government to manage solid waste disposal.

One crony is a Senator who was director of 43 companies and had shareholdings in 10. These companies had interest in sewerage treatment and the property sector.

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