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Mahathir-Anwar

PM SAYS NO DEAL OFFERED TO ANWAR

KUALA LUMPUR, April 22 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today said he had never told Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim that he (Anwar) would not be prosecuted if he agreed to withdraw.

"It is pure fabrication. I have never said that if he withdrew, then there would be no charges," he said when commenting on whether Anwar would face other charges after being sentenced to six years jail last week on four corruption charges of misuse of power.

Dr Mahathir said he told Anwar that it would be better if he (Anwar) withdrew as usually done as previously, there had been ministers and chief ministers who were charged in court after their services were terminated.

"Instead, he said he would not withdraw but would fight back when I said to him that he should withdraw," he told reporters after tabling a motion on the Seventh Malaysia Plan's mid-term review in the Dewan Rakyat.

Anwar was sacked from the government on Sept 2, 1998 and expelled from Umno a day later.

Dr Mahathir said it was up to Attorney General Tan Sri Mohtar Abdullah to decide whether Anwar should stand trial on other charges as he (Dr Mahathir) did not have a say on the matter.

"It is not within my prerogative," he said.

The Prime Minister said Anwar had mentioned in his mitigation last week that he (Dr Mahathir) had said that if he (Anwar) withdrew, no charges would be brought against him.

"This is the problem with Datuk Seri Anwar. He thinks he could interfere in the process of law, that was why he intervened in the case concerning the letter...and, he thought that I too would intervene," he said.

Dr Mahathir said charges against Anwar arose from the police report lodged by the former deputy prime minister himself.

"When the police found something, they had to press charges. I do not have the power to stop it...I had never promised that if he withdrew, I would not charge him," he said.

Dr Mahathir said the process of law must be implemented without taking into consideration one's position, even if it involved a Cabinet minister.

"We all talk about all being equal in the eyes of the law but when it is applied against one's ownself or a friend, we take the view that the law is flawed," he said.

"When the law is applied against a Cabinet minister, I have never said...oh, this is a Cabinet minister, he cannot be charged."

Dr Mahathir cited the case of former Melaka state executive councillor Datuk Sahar Arpan who was convicted of corruption.

"Going by Datuk Seri Anwar's reasoning, I could stop it...do not charge him, he is my man, an Umno man. But, we did not interfere because it was a matter for the Attorney General and the police. They carry out their duties.

"If I were to intervene, I think the law in Malaysia would see a distinction between supporters of the governing party and the opposition. We detain people from the opposition but not our people, this is not right," he added.

-- BERNAMA

MAM MAI THG