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PM to name Anwar crony `when the time comes'

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PRIME Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said when the right time comes, he will reveal the identity of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's crony who has RM230 million in cash.

In the meantime, the Government is studying whether any action can be taken against the individual, Dr Mahathir said at a press conference after chairing an Umno Supreme Council meeting in Kuala Lumpur last night.

"I told the Supreme Council about the case but I did not give the name. I have declarations (of assets) given to me as Prime Minister," said Dr Mahathir, who is also Umno president.

Asset declaration forms are normally filed by government employees, elected representatives, state executive councillors, menteri besar and Cabinet ministers.

Dr Mahathir first spoke of having proof that properties and huge contracts were secured by cronies of former deputy prime minister Anwar during his visit to Kedah over the weekend.

Asked if there are cases involving other individuals, the Prime Minister said there are those who were appointed directors and chairmen of companies because they were close to Anwar.

"Companies that had Anwar's cronies among their directors did not face many problems. Many companies had to appoint Anwar's cronies as directors and chairmen so that they would not face many problems," Dr Mahathir said. He added that it is also possible the money owned by these cronies might have been used to finance the recent street demonstrations.

Asked about former Selangor menteri besar Tan Sri Muhammad Muhammad Taib's position as Umno vice president, Dr Mahathir said no decision was made at last night's Supreme Council meeting.

Muhammad took leave from his Umno post following charges of failing to declare RM2.4 million cash during a trip to Australia. The Brisbane District Court acquitted him of the charges last year.

He was also acquitted by the High Court in December last year on charges of failing to declare his assets and that of his family.

Dr Mahathir said the Supreme Council is concerned that some individuals are misinterpreting the teachings of Islam for political mileage, in particular by justifying the use of profanity in the book "SHIT" by Shahnnon Ahmad.

"Umno does not plan to ask the Government to ban the book because it is a book that shows how low they will go because of hate and to incite hatred towards certain people, especially the Prime Minister," he added.

Dr Mahathir said the Supreme Council has expelled 27 party members, one for contesting in the recent Sabah election as an independent candidate, and 26 for joining opposition parties.

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