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Abdullah-Umno (Cronies)

SHARES RECIPIENT LIST PROVES OPPOSITION CLAIM UNFOUNDED

KUALA LUMPUR, June 19 (Bernama) -- Umno today released a list of recipients of special shares and Finance Ministry projects when Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim was the minister.

This is to enable Malaysians make own interpretations of allegations of cronyism and nepotism against a few national leaders.

Deputy Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the decision to release the list during the Umno general assembly, which entered the third day today, reflected transparency of the government.

"This is the transparency the people want. They want to know what takes place," he said.

Abdullah, who is also Umno vice president, told reporters this when approached about the list being displayed at the level-four lobby of the Putra World Trade Centre, the venue of the party's general assembly.

Listed recipients of shares included several of Anwar's family members namely his father Datuk Ibrahim Abdul Rahman and younger brother Marzukhi.

Abdullah said several national leaders, including Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and First Finance Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin have been accused of farming out contracts and shares to their cronies.

He said the latest list would prove that such allegations were baseless.

"Let the people see the list and make their own deductions," he said.

The list named recipients of special shares and privatised projects from 1993 to 1998, the period when Anwar was finance minister until his dismissal from the Cabinet on Sept 2 1998.

Umno sacked him as deputy president the next day.

Anwar, who was made finance minister on March 15 1991 and deputy prime minister in 1993, is now serving a six-year jail term for corrupt practice of abusing his position.

The list, headlined "Special Bumiputera shares allocated by the Finance Ministry from 1993 to 1998" comes into two sub-lists.

The first itemised the shares and the second, privatised projects.

The second sub-list, headlined "Privatisation projects awarded to supporters of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim through the Economic Planning Unit", grouped the projects into those for which the agreements have been signed up to last Tuesday and those yet to be signed.

Up to last June 15, a total of 18 projects already signed for were given to companies with Anwar's supporters as the major share-holders.

One of such companies is Syarikat Express Rail Link Sdn Berhad which was awarded the RM2.4 billion Express Rail Link connecting the city to the new KL International Airport in Sepang.

The former Pulau Pinang Umno Youth chief Rahim Ghouse is the company's majority share-holder.

A similar list was also displayed at last year's Umno general assembly.

Umno decided to publicise the list last year and this year after the Umno Youth chief then Datuk Ahmad Zahid Hamidi openly accused the government of nepotism and cronyism.

Zahid made the allegation upon Anwar's instructions.

In his presidential address to the assembly yesterday, Dr Mahathir said Zahid's accusation formed part of Anwar's plot to topple and take over the Umno leadership.

However, Dr Mahathir said, the plot failed as the 1998 Umno general

assembly did not show opposition to him and the show of trust made him stay on as party president.

Dr Mahathir said Anwar had hoped that if the economy deteriorated, the government would be blamed by the people, especially delegates to the 1998 assembly, then the party president would step down.

-- BERNAMA

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