

Mahathir: Anwar's misfortune a blessing to PAS

The misfortune of former deputy Umno president and deputy prime minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim was a blessing to PAS, Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad says.

Although PAS knew earlier about Anwar's immorality, about which the party insinuated when he was an Umno leader, the party "closed an eye and pretended to rally support" for Anwar after he was sacked.

Mahathir said PAS used Anwar's supporters, collaborated with Parti Keadilan Nasional and was a willing partner of people who once ran down or ousted its quest for an Islamic state.

"PAS is not sympathetic to Anwar because of his black eye or for being found guilty and imprisoned. What PAS saw was the opportunity to exploit Anwar's fate to get votes.

"If Anwar and his supporters believe PAS will appoint him prime minister if they win, then they are daydreaming," he told more than 2,000 delegates at the 54th general assembly at PWTC.

"Unless Keadilan wins more seats than PAS and DAP, it is most unlikely PAS will accept Anwar as PM."

Keadilan, he said, which claimed to be fighting against injustice and for the rule of law, is upholding just the opposite, since its priority is to prevent Anwar from being put on trial.

To allege that everything is a conspiracy or the work of specific individuals with evil intentions, Mahathir said, cannot be the basis for refuting charges in a court of law.

In principle, he said, whether a conspiracy exists or not, if a crime has been committed and the evidence clearly has convinced the

judge, then the accused can be found guilty.

"If conspiracy can be accepted as the basis why charges cannot be made, then nobody can be charged in court and the rule of law cannot be practised.

"Conspiracy is not a reason to legitimise crime," he said, adding that the allegation was only to pull the wool over the people's eyes about Anwar's own wrongdoings.

Saying that he has received information about Anwar's conspiracy, Mahathir said Anwar was the culprit who made (former Youth chief Datuk Ahmad) Zahid Hamidi hurl accusations against him.

It is impossible to conceal such a conspiracy, he said.

Anwar's removal was not due to his politics or Umno's, but "because of Anwar's low morals which made him unsuitable to become the prime minister of Malaysia".

"Can I remain silent and allow this kind of person to become the PM of this country?" he asked.

Mahathir urged the people who were angry with him and with Umno to think fairly and listen to both sides without becoming too emotional or vartisan because of an individual whom they think had been victimised.

Mahathir reiterated that as prime minister, he has the right to sack any member of the government, without giving notice or reason.

Many ministers have been terminated without any allegation of conspiracy.

He also questioned why conspiracy was raised, when it was Anwar who brought misfortune upon himself by making the police report, with the hope of using the police to ban the book 50 **Reasons Why Anwar Cannot Become PM.**

SUN 12.5.2000