

'Dr M and Anwar's father were friends'

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By Anne Muhammad

Former prime minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad attended the funeral of PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim's father today because he was friends with the deceased, Anwar's wife Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail said.

Even so, Wan Azizah who is also PKR president, admitted she was surprised that the man who sacked her husband from the deputy prime minister post in 1998 paid a visit.

"Mahathir and (wife) Dr Siti Hasmah worked with my late father-in-law when he was parliamentary secretary at the Health Ministry.

"I believe he was here because of friendship and our ties as Muslims," she said.

Wan Azizah said Ibrahim was active in Umno, and fostered ties with Mahathir then. Ibrahim was Umno MP for Seberang Perai Tengah from 1959 to 1969.

Mahathir and his wife visited Ibrahim's home in Country Heights, Selangor today to pay last respects, but left before Anwar arrived from prison.

Also spotted paying his respects today was Home Minister Ahmad Zahid Hamidi.

Anwar is serving a five year sentence for sodomy and was granted permission to attend his father's funeral, albeit while escorted by submachine gun-carrying prison guards.

Cries of Reformasi as Anwar escorted away

The burial took place under a drizzle and was witnessed by about 400 people, including national laureate A Samad Said and Selangor Menteri Besar Azmin Ali.

Anwar was earlier seen hugging his daughters before reciting prayers over his father's remains.

He laid flowers on Ibrahim's grave before escorted into a four wheel drive vehicle back to Sungai Buloh prison.

There was jostling between security personnel and the crowd when Anwar was escorted away, with supporters chanting PKR's battle cries 'Reformasi' and 'Lawan Tetap Lawan'.

Anwar waved to his supporters as he was taken away.

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