

Another round of ISA for Anwar?
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Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi has left political observers wondering if Opposition Leader Anwar Ibrahim could once again be detained under the Internal Security Act.

The premier issued a warning that appear to indicate the possibility of an ISA arrest for the maverick politician at press conference at Putrajaya this afternoon to announce a reshuffle of cabinet portfolios.

He has become a threat to the economy and possibly (national) security," he said.

This in itself provides sufficient grounds for the authorities to invoke the tough security law, which provides detention without trial against Anwar.

And when asked what action the government would take against him, Abdullah refused to reveal his cards, saying: "I will not indicate what plan I will take, what I do will be in the best interests of the people and the country."

"Because of Anwar's actions, there are fund managers who have reported that Malaysia is purportedly no longer a good place for investment because of the unstable political climate."

Abdullah said the opposition leader has lied a lot about the country's economic status, even claiming that there is no Foreign Direct Investments (FDI) coming in.

On the contrary, the premier said FDI is still flowing in and Malaysia is popular among investors.

"Anwar wants to destroy the country and exploit the people's trust and tarnish the country's image abroad."

Using the ISA against Anwar would undoubtedly have severe repercussions but such a move would not come as a surprise after three individuals, including an opposition politician, were nabbed under the draconian law last Friday.

James Chin, a political analyst from Monash University's campus in Kuala Lumpur, said Abdullah's comments were a clear warning that Anwar could face arrest under ISA.

"If they arrest Anwar under ISA, it will not be accepted by both Malaysians and the international community," he told AFP.

Takeover bid

Since the March 8 general election, Anwar had been a major thorn on the side of Barisan Nasional by threatening to launch a political coup.

pakatan rakyat 916 gathering kelana jaya 150908 anwar.jpgThe two-time ISA veteran claimed that he has enough ruling MPs willing to cross over into the opposition alliance Pakatan Rakyat in order for him to form government with a simple majority.

Anwar had failed to initiate the coup yesterday, Sept 16 - the date which he had set - but reiterated that he had the numbers and the toppling of the BN-led government was imminent.

The 61-year-old politician had also requested to meet Abdullah to discuss a transition of power plan and urged the premier not to resort to drastic measures, like declaring an emergency, to thwart the takeover.

Abdullah, however, rejected the meeting again today and dismissed the takeover claims as lies. He accused Anwar of "lying to the public and confusing the people".

"There is nothing to discuss," said the prime minister.

Anwar, who is currently facing a court battle over a sodomy charge, was first arrested under the ISA in 1974 in connection with a student protest. The former student leader was incarcerated for 20 months.

More than two decades later, he was once again briefly arrested under the ISA after spearheading a series of protests against his sacking as deputy premier in 1998.

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