

Dr M: Hard To Forgive Anwar
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KUALA LUMPUR -- Former Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad said he finds it difficult to forgive Anwar Ibrahim for what his former deputy had done demonising him in the eyes of the world.

In his autobiography, "A Doctor in the House: The Memoirs of Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad", which was just launched, he said that Anwar, after being sacked, went all over the country, telling the people that his dismissal was part of a conspiracy to prevent him from becoming Prime Minister.

Anwar also had spent much time ingratiating himself with UMNO division leaders and branch members to promote himself, especially among the kampung people, and make him (Mahathir) appear unjust in the eyes of many pious Muslims.

"Anwar is an undeniably charismatic man and he knows how to get people to support him. All that I had done for Anwar in the past has been brushed aside.

I was seen as having victimised him and throwing him into jail, as if there were no trial.

"Whenever my name is mentioned in a book or article, I am described as the Prime Minister who threw his deputy into jail. The fact that he was properly charged and tried in court is never mentioned," Mahathir said.

Mahathir said that he was forgiving by nature and had rehabilitated the careers of many people who tried to undermine him politically, and even named one of them as his successor. But he finds it difficult to forgive Anwar.

He also said that Anwar was not the Prime Minister today because of his own actions.

"He left me no choice but to remove him and I did what I thought was the best for the country. I may have made many mistakes, but removing Anwar was not one of them," he said.

In his book Mahathir also said that former Singapore Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, whom he suspects of once nursing the hope of becoming Prime Minister of this country, was frustrated when the first Malaysian Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman Putra confined the activities of the Lee People's Action Party to Singapore and virtually turned it into the opposition party.

In defiance, he said, the PAP contested against MCA candidates in the 1964 General Election but did poorly, winning only one seat and that put paid to Lee's hope of displacing MCA as UMNO's chief partner in the Alliance Government.

The show of defiance convinced Tunku that there could be no understanding with the PAP and he consequently expelled Singapore from Malaysia in 1965.

"Enforced separation meant the end of Lee's dream. He (Lee) cried when announcing it

(separation from Malaysia) on television and never forgave the Tunku," Mahathir said.

(Bernama)

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