

Anwar: Mahathir felt threatened by me

KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, who is suing Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad for defamation, claimed that the former prime minister felt threatened by his (Anwar's) popularity in Umno.

He said Dr Mahathir feared that he would challenge him for the Umno presidency and subsequently his political power as prime minister.

"This fear and uncertainty of the defendant (Dr Mahathir) over his political power as prime minister worsened in September 1998," he said in his response to the statement of defence by the former prime minister that was filed at the High Court registry by his lawyer, S.N. Nair.

In his response, the former deputy prime minister added:

"Further, my proposal, as the (then) finance minister, to handle the financial crisis of 1997/1998 had made the defendant furious."

In the suit filed last Jan 27, Anwar had claimed that Dr Mahathir had issued defamatory statements about him to several journalists and local and international media representatives.

Dr Mahathir is alleged to have made the statements at a press conference at the premises of the Human Rights Commission of Malaysia here in September last year.

Anwar claimed that the statement implicated him as a homosexual, a wayward person, one who was unqualified to hold political posts or any post, a man with criminal

inclination and a danger to society.

Anwar, who is seeking compensatory, aggravated and exemplary damages as well as other relief which the court deems fit, also wants a court injunction to prevent Dr Mahathir and/or his agents from repeating the defamatory words by way of speech or publication. - Bernama