

'I was duped in PM succession plan'

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Anwar: Dr M kept changing date to step down, then quit without informing Pakatan

PETALING JAYA: PKR president Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has now realised that he was duped by Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad when the latter promised to pass on the country's top job to him, *Sin Chew Daily* reported.

In an exclusive interview with the newspaper, the Pakatan Harapan leader said right from the get go, he had believed that Dr Mahathir would fulfil his promise of handing over the baton to him after two years in office.

"We did not know earlier but we know now," Anwar was quoted as saying in the interview.

However, Dr Mahathir kept changing the date before finally saying he would vacate the post after the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (Apec) meeting this November.

On Feb 24, he resigned as prime minister without informing Pakatan party leaders, leading to the collapse of the Pakatan-led government and voiding the succession promise.

Anwar said he knew many were against him being prime minister.

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"Many billionaires, including a rich Malay whom I know. I also know those corrupted ones were against me too. They are playing the racial card by saying 'Anwar is not very Malay, and he does not protect the Malays'.

"I have been taking this stand firmly, mainly because our target is to enhance the economy.

"Everyone can be successful. We should support the ones with potential, including Chinese entrepreneurs.

"I am concerned with the welfare of the people. I hate those who steal from the poor," he said.

Anwar maintained that Dr Mahathir's resignation as prime minister was the main cause of the collapse of the 22-month-old Pakatan government.

If Dr Mahathir did not resign, Pakatan would still be the government now, he said, adding that all internal issues could have been dealt with.

"It is a fact there are traitors in PKR and Parti Pribumi Bersatu Malaysia.

"But do you think those traitors mushroomed in one week? They must have planned this a long time ago. The question is, why do we allow such a scenario to occur?"

"Some people would rather that this

occurred. The (audio) recording of the meeting has proven that," said Anwar, adding that Dr Mahathir was accountable for the outcome.

He also said he did not know whether Dr Mahathir, who is former Bersatu chairman, was responsible for planning the exit of Bersatu from Pakatan.

"But there must be elements which have changed the (initial) multiracial approach."

Anwar denied that Dr Mahathir's resignation was due to pressure from PKR, claiming that the request made by PKR grassroots for Dr Mahathir to vacate the position was not a form of pressure.

"Why was there pressure? Because he (Dr Mahathir) did not seem to be leaving. One year, two years, three years, election ...," said Anwar, who added that while he could still communicate with Dr Mahathir, he would never endorse him as prime minister again.

"Dr Mahathir is unable to garner support (to rule) from the majority of MPs," said Anwar.