

Dr M: Anwar lied in BBC interview

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KUALA LUMPUR, Wed. — Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad said his former deputy, Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim, lied in an interview with the British Broadcasting Corporation's (BBC) *Hardtalk* programme when he alleged that the former Prime Minister owned a 70 per cent equity in private television station TV3.

Dr Mahathir said Anwar wanted to paint him as a corrupt leader.

That done, Anwar could then justify that this was the reason Dr Mahathir did not want him to be Prime Minister.

"Allegedly, I did not want him to replace me because I had committed many crimes and feared that he would take action against me if he became Prime Minister."

"It is slander. I (have only owned) about 200 shares in Malaysian Tobacco which I bought even before becoming a minister. That is all that I have."

"Other than that, I also invested in Amanah Saham Nasional and Amanah Saham Bumiputera."

"But I didn't buy any other shares. Never," he said.

Referring to the BBC interview, Dr Mahathir said:

"Anwar repeatedly said the 70 per cent was owned by me."

"He told the whole world that I am corrupt and made other accusations."

"If the people want to guess who the backstabber is, then this is the man."

"I nurtured him and let him enter Umno. I helped him to become Youth chief and to become vice-president."

"He became deputy president, then Deputy Prime Minister — I gave him numerous offices but he still slanders me," Dr Mahathir told *Berita Harian* in an in-

terview at his office in Putrajaya today.

Dr Mahathir said that as Umno president then, he was a trustee for properties and shares owned by Umno — but even then it was together with the deputy president and treasurer.

(Anwar was deputy president of Umno from 1993 until he was expelled in 1998.)

"I become Umno's trustee but he (Anwar) said that it was privately owned by me. You can check and see how many shares I own in TV3," he said. (Dr Mahathir does not own any shares in

TV3.)

"I never had any shares in any companies until I quit. I never bought anything although I had the right to and could have bought the shares," he said.

Dr Mahathir said that slander was a major sin (in Islam) and somebody like Anwar, who claimed to be religious, should not make such accusations.

"That's not good, it's sinful to slander. As someone who professes to be religious, don't make false accusations — it's a big sin. I think he knows that," Dr Mahathir said. — BH

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Dr Mahathir