

Dr M: Nepotism, cronyism in Cabinet if Anwar becomes PM
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KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 25 — Nepotism and cronyism will rule the Cabinet if Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim assumes the prime minister's mantle, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad warned today within hours of the opposition leader unveiling the Pakatan Rakyat (PR) pact's manifesto for Election 2013.

The former prime minister mounted a scathing attack against his ex-protégé, accusing the latter of having made various defamatory statements against his kin as the opposition bloc stepped up its pace in the race to wrest Putrajaya from the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN).

"The Keadilan party belongs to Anwar Ibrahim," Dr Mahathir (picture) wrote in his chedet.cc blog, referring to the PR anchor party.

"If he becomes prime minister certainly the Cabinet will be filled with his family and his friends as ministers. Easy to do anything," he added.

Dr Mahathir also said that Anwar had set up a political party and installed his wife to be its president, his daughter to be its vice-president and a close friend to be its deputy president.

He alleged that when Anwar was his deputy and the finance minister, the latter had given out many contracts to his political supporters and his family.

"The Ministry had displayed during the Umno general assembly a list of those who got contracts while he was in power. In the list are the names of his supporters and family. Not one of my children was listed," Dr Mahathir said.

The still-influential Umno politician noted that he had never once played favourites when it came to dishing out lucrative government contracts while in power, unlike Anwar, whom he said had previously shown a tendency to pick and choose his family and friends for top political or business jobs.

The 87-year-old appeared particularly defensive of his eldest son Mirzan, whose positions as a one-time board member on Manila-based corporate giants San Miguel Corp and currently in oil company Petron, have frequently been used as targets for Anwar and PR politicians.

"After the defamation thrown against him, my son resigned. Now he is only a director in the oil company Petron.

"If Anwar's child and wife can be politicians, why can my children not enter into business for themselves without being defamed by Anwar? No more political capital?" Dr Mahathir asked.

In a final challenge to his nemesis, Dr Mahathir dared Anwar to swear an oath on the Quran regarding the latter's second sodomy case, which has dogged the PKR leader despite his acquittal by the Kuala Lumpur High Court last year.

Dr Mahathir is known to be highly critical of Anwar, whom he had picked and groomed from a firebrand Islamic scholar to be his successor to head the government in the 1990s but sacked in 1998 after sodomy and corruption allegations surfaced.

Anwar, who is touted to be PR's most likely candidate for prime minister, had earlier today promised the pact will enrich Malaysians regardless of their racial affinity.

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