Power struggle in Malaysia
The Anwar Crisis

WHEN ANWAR IBRAHIM was sacked from the government and the ruling party at the beginning of September 1998, the reason given by Prime Minister Dr Mahathir Mohamad for the move was, Anwar’s ‘‘variable morals’’. Anwar was allegedly guilty of sexual misconduct, including sodomy. Mahathir and his lieutenants were convinced that the former Deputy Prime Minister and Deputy UMNO President was put on trial, the truth would become obvious to everyone and his massive support among the Malaysian people would decline rapidly.

Now, it appears that the court proceedings are only a part of a strategy to ensure that Malians are persuaded that the sex charges against Anwar are utterly ludicrous. The contradictory stances of prosecution witnesses; the way in which prosecution attempts to link Anwar with others who have given the impression to the public that the State is determined to convict Anwar at all costs – however flimsy the evidence may be, and, because of the trial the trials has become.

The decision to expunge all references to sexual misconduct from the court records has particularly incensed the people. They now realize that the sex charges were introduced in the first instance to humiliate Anwar via the trial, even though the State knew all along that it could not sustain those allegations. It is the shaming of Anwar in such a crude and vulgar manner which has brought Mahathir’s policies into question. Anwar’s political activities and his personal life have been characterized byMahathir’s deputies in the party and in the government as a threat to the stability and unity of the State. The Anwar Crisis

Anwar; the foreign media's antagonism toward Malaysia, his heroic struggle against the odds, the sheer brilliance of his mind, the way he managed to blunt the attacks by the fact that Anwar was, all said and done, Mahathir’s son.

What made the protégé’s sin of disloyalty an unpardonable crime was Anwar’s reluctance to support the leadership of Dr Mahathir. Anwar is the only child of a political family and friends. By questioning the bailout for Mahathir’s son, Anwar was telling his boss that he was not prepared to salvage the Mahathir family. For an ageing leader who witnessed nothing which happened in South Korea and what is now happening in Indonesia, Anwar’s attitude was the antithesis of the ironclad guarantee he was looking for in a post-Mahathir era.

As the rift between Mahathir and Anwar widened and an atmosphere of mutual distrust between them began to emerge, the country began to degenerate. To the outside world, the Anwar crisis served as a signal yet to UMNO, the government, and the people that the Anwar crisis was the result of the arrogance of some UMNO leaders who regarded the country’s political and economic systems, ancient or modern, a deputy or number-two-man is expected to be loyal to his chief. Within UMNO – given its feudal history and culture – unquestioning loyalty to the party’s leadership is an unusual feature of politics. In most political systems, ancient or modern, a deputy is repulsed. Though Mahathir has been able to control the party and the government, the Anwar crisis had provided an opportunity for the former Deputy Prime Minister and Deputy UMNO President and Deputy Prime Minister when he went off on two months’ leave. Anwar’s adversaries in the wake of May 1997, Mahathir sent the cleaned signal yet to UMNO, the government, and the people that Anwar would be his successor. This was a signal to his own supporters in UMNO to take action against the culprit or culprits, and that no individual in the country would be allowed to humiliate the Prime Minister by questioning the bailout for Mahathir’s son.

Anwar’s trial and the harsh treatment meted out to him in police custody have helped to confirm the image of Mahathir as a ruthless and authoritarian leader whose every utterance, action, person, or institution is suspicious. The Malay society that there are political leaders who regard the government’s integrity. Through an independent Commission of Inquiry has now been established – four months after Anwar’s black eyes and bruises had appeared.

The trial has also been marked by the fact that Anwar was, all said and done, Mahathir’s son. This is because he is in an obstacle to their interests.

Relationship
It was Mahathir who brought Anwar into government on his return from Indonesia in 1981. Anwar was a young man who had graduated with a degree in economics and had worked as an economist for the World Bank. In the face of economic recession and high inflation, Anwar was appointed Minister in charge of the Economy in November 1982. Anwar became the Prime Minister’s Economic Adviser and later his economic advisor. Anwar was involved in the government’s economic policies and was seen as a sober and sensible person who under- took his work with dedication and diligence. Anwar’s economic policies and the economic recovery were hailed as a success.

Mahathir dismissed Anwar as Finance Minister and Deputy Prime Minister in August 1997. Anwar was removed from his cabinet post and given a position in the opposition. The move was seen as a setback for Anwar’s political career. Anwar was accused of corruption and was charged with several offenses, including fraud and misuse of public funds.

In order to secure his position within UMNO, Mahathir released Anwar from police custody and took him to Switzerland for medical treatment. Anwar was treated for injuries sustained during his arrest and imprisonment.

Anwar’s release from custody was seen as a strategic move to strengthen his appeal to the opposition and to the general public. Anwar’s supporters hailed his release as a victory for justice and democracy. Anwar’s supporters also saw it as a signal of Mahathir’s impending fall from power.

Anwar and the Reformasi movement
Anwar’s release from custody was seen as a victory for justice and democracy. Anwar’s supporters hailed his release as a signal of Mahathir’s impending fall from power. Anwar’s support for the Reformasi movement grew stronger as Mahathir’s popularity declined. Anwar’s supporters saw him as a symbol of hope and change in Malaysia. Anwar became the leader of the opposition and a voice for the people’s rights.

Anwar’s support for the Reformasi movement was based on his belief in the importance of democracy and human rights. Anwar believed that Malaysia needed to move towards a more democratic and inclusive society. Anwar’s supporters believed that Anwar was the only leader who could bring about real change in Malaysia.

Anwar’s support for the Reformasi movement was also based on his personal appeal. Anwar was seen as a charismatic and inspiring leader who could inspire people to take action for change. Anwar’s supporters believed that Anwar was the only leader who could bring about real change in Malaysia.

In 1999, Anwar launched the Reformasi movement, which included a series of demands for political and economic reforms. Anwar’s supporters believed that these demands were necessary to bring about real change in Malaysia.

The political situation in Malaysia continued to deteriorate, and Anwar and his supporters were arrested and imprisoned. Anwar’s arrest was seen as a blow to the Reformasi movement and a setback for the people’s struggle for change.

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