

26 JUL 1996

Anwar-Mahathir

NO NEED TO WORRY ABOUT PM'S HEALTH, SAYS ANWAR

PULAU PINANG, July 26 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim today advised the people not to be unduly worried over Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's health.

"He is slightly ill now, so we advised him to take a rest," Anwar told reporters when asked to comment on speculation regarding the Prime Minister's health.

"The Prime Minister is a bit ill and I visited him before Friday prayers today...He can also fall sick, sometimes I do too," he told reporters after chairing the Pulau Pinang Bumiputera Participation Steering Committee meeting here.

In fact, the Prime Minister wanted to work as usual but was advised to take a rest and to postpone his programmes to next week, he said.

"Although he can go and open (the Kubang Pasu Umno meeting tomorrow), I think his health is important too and he should rest," he said.

Anwar said several of the Prime Minister's programmes like the Kubang Pasu delegates meeting tomorrow had been postponed to Aug 4.

"God willing...his other programmes will go on as scheduled from this Monday."

On the fall in share prices following speculation on Dr Mahathir's health, Anwar said: "It is good that they see the importance of the Prime Minister's health. If he is a bit sick, it (share market) falls slightly is all right."

Anwar also said the steering committee would scrutinise several projects, including old ones, to assess the effectiveness of their implementation.

The Malays should be enlightened on the opportunities and priorities given to them, he said.

The interests of the local people should not be overlooked when implementing projects for Bumiputeras in certain areas in the state, he said.

Citing an example, he said the guidelines on building of low- and medium-cost houses should be adhered to when implementing the steering committee's development programmes.

This should be explained right to the grassroots level or it might create fears and misunderstanding among the local population, he said.

The meeting also deliberated on previous decisions taken regarding concerns among Bumiputeras that no additional measures were taken to develop Malay areas here like Jelutong, Tanjung and Bukit Bendera.

As such, the development project in Kampung Tengah which had been agreed to would be developed according to schedule, he said.

Anwar also sought the state government's cooperation to ensure that this was implemented. -- BERNAMA

NH YBY