

23 MAY 1997

Anwar-Perwaja

ANWAR:PM ORDERS PERWAJA FIASCO PROBE TO PROCEED

SHAH ALAM, May 23 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has ordered the Anti-Corruption Agency (ACA) and the police to continue with investigations into the RM2.9 billion loss by the formerly government-owned Perwaja steel plant linked to its former managing director Tan Sri Eric Chia.

Acting Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim disclosed this to reporters here today after opening an international conference on Islamic art and architecture.

"They (the ACA and the police) have submitted their preliminary reports to PM and PM has directed that the probe should continue," Anwar said.

Reporters approached Anwar on the latest development in investigations into the fiasco in the wake of recent news reports of police and the ACA's denial of Chia's arrest.

Asked on his meeting with ACA officers yesterday, Anwar said it had nothing to do with the Perwaja-Chia inquiry.

"It was not (about Perwaja). The ACA updates me regularly and yesterday's meeting was more on amendments to the Anti-Corruption Act," he said.

Anwar, who is also Finance Minister, was also asked on the latest on the inquiry into alleged wrongdoing in the award of a Telekom Malaysia Berhad tender to Ericsson Telecommunications.

The Acting Prime Minister replied that he was leaving it to the parties conducting the investigation to come up with an explanation.

"What I've got before was an initial report not implicating anything but I reckon it is more proper for the parties tasked with the inquiry to come up with an explanation," he said.

Telekom Malaysia and the Finance Ministry's Contracts Division were earlier directed to investigate allegations of impropriety in the awarding of the tender.

A news report last Tuesday quoted a senior Ericsson official as saying that the company has been cleared of alleged impropriety in the award of a contract by Telekom Malaysia Bhd.

Asked on the company's statement, Anwar said it was free to come up with whatever statements.

"It is free to make statements but an official statement will come from parties tasked with the probe," he said. -- Bernama

AZZ RN