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Anwar-Yahaya

ANWAR AMONG LAST TO SEE YAHAYA ALIVE

KUALA LUMPUR, March 4 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim is among the last persons to see Tan Sri Yahaya Ahmad alive before he was killed last night in the helicopter crash near Kuala Lipis, some 250km from here.

Anwar, who was Yahaya's classmate at the Malay College Kuala Kangsar, said he and the college old boys hosted a party for their former teachers at his residence here last night.

Anwar said Yahaya assisted him to brief the former teachers on the progress of each of the old boys who attended the function.

"Yahaya was with us until 10pm. He informed me that his mother was sick in Kuala Terengganu before leaving the function with his wife Puan Sri Rahana," the Deputy Prime Minister told reporters here today.

"I was anxious about flying at night in a helicopter but Yahaya said he had to go because his mother was very ill," said Anwar, said a sorrowful Anwar.

He said he was informed at about 1am that the helicopter was missing and as soon as it was confirmed that the chopper carrying Yahaya and his wife had crashed, he rushed to his house in Jalan Semarak here to meet his children.

Anwar, in recalling the events at the function, said, "he did not look too cheerful because his mother was very ill."

He described Yahaya's death as not only a personal loss to him but also the loss of a corporate leader whom the country was proud of.

"His death is indeed a loss to the country," he said.

Asked whether appropriate measures would be taken to run Yahaya's businesses, Anwar said, "that I don't worry because he has managed all his businesses well and entrusted the responsibilities of his companies to able managers. Hence, there should no concern on this aspect.

"However, what is coming back to me are the moments which I spent with his family at his house last night," he said.

Asked whether the tragedy would affect the Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange, Anwar, who is Finance Minister, said: I hope the market will be more wise because we are committed to continuing the support for his projects."

On the future of the companies led by Yahaya, he said he did not worry on the position of the companies as he had laid a strong foundation by placing people of calibre to manage them.

"One major thing he did was to ensure that his companies were led by very competent chiefs," he said.

Asked whether the helicopter crash could be due to sabotage, Anwar said the police would carry out a full scale investigations into the incident but at this juncture, "we don't think there is any act of sabotage."

"It is too early to draw a conclusion but we have to look at the whole episode including the cause of the crash," he said.

Anwar said he and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad would leave for Terenggamu this evening to pay their last respects.

-- BERNAMA

ZAB TS