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Anwar-Corruption

NAMES OF SUSPECTS TO BE WITHHELD UNTIL INVESTIGATIONS ARE COMPLETED

SHAH ALAM, June 3 (Bernama) -- Acting Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said today that the names of people investigated for alleged corrupt practices will not be divulged until they are produced in court.

He said that it would be unfair to disclose their names just because reports had been lodged against them with the Anti Corruption Agency (ACA).

Their reputation would be tarnished and their position would be jeopardised if their names were to be disclosed, he said after opening an international seminar on Islamic thinker Muhammad Iqbal, here.

He was commenting on the position of seven State Executive Councillors said to be under investigation by the ACA.

Anwar said that the names of suspects would only be disclosed when investigations had been completed and a decision had been made to prosecute them.

Stressing that corrupt practices involving government servants, politicians and the public would not be tolerated, Anwar said each report would be investigated because sometimes there were allegations made out of malice.

"There have been cases...when someone asks for land but doesn't get it, he makes allegations, the same goes when he asks for contracts but fails to get it, he will make allegations," he said adding that some of the cases were genuine whereas some are baseless.

He said corruption was a question of morality and justice, therefore it cannot be assumed that when someone was involved the others would also be involved.

"I do not want overzealousness to make us act unfairly," he said adding that he knew the people wanted action against corruption.

He said the government was always firm but in this case it needs proof and evidence.

Anwar said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had discussed the matter at length with him before leaving for his holiday abroad and he (Anwar) was in constant contact with Dr Mahathir, informing him of developments.

"We have come to a decision to be firm and not tolerate corruption and malpractices," he said.

Asked on whether there will be more corruption cases involving politicians being brought to court, he said: "We have given ample warning in the past and now we've proceeded with some action and will continue to do so."

On the declaration of assets by state executive councillors and assemblymen, he said this had long been in practice only that the ACA was asked to step it up, with more authority, manpower and resources given.

"The directive was there but we wanted the ACA to update on the position in the states and therefore we do it as a process including that for all new appointment of Exco members...we would like to see their assets declaration updated," he said.

On Sahar's position, he said it was a party matter and would be discussed on June 5. -- BERNAMA

MNY ZUL RM