

08 JUN 1997

Anwar-Umno (With Pix)

NO PLACE IN UMNO FOR DISHONEST LEADERS- ANWAR

ALOR SETAR, June 8 (Bernama) -- Acting Umno President Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim today reiterated that dishonest leaders will have no place in the party and action against such people will continue without any form of compromise.

"There can be no compromise after the frequent warnings that had been given," he said when laying the foundation stone for the Jerlun Umno Division Building at Air Hitam near here.

The same warning also went to party members particularly leaders including those of Barisan Nasional component parties and government officers and they should not take this warning lightly, the Acting Prime Minister said.

He said the main agenda of the government and Umno was not only to ensure that the national economy grew but also to ensure the integrity of the leaders and party members.

"Hence we'll no longer compromise. To say that we did not give warnings is not true. Warnings had been given umpteen times. To say that we are not stern ...is also not true. Party President Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had even cried over this issue at the Umno General Assembly," he said.

Anwar also rejected the contention among some that the Umno Supreme Council did not give enough consideration before deciding to sack or suspend a person suspected to be involved in corruption.

"If there are people who say we did not consider the matter carefully... I don't agree at all," he said.

He said Umno took firm action against those who diverted to serve as a lesson to Barisan Nasional component parties and government officers.

He said when firm action was taken against Umno leaders who were corrupt, leaders of BN component parties and government officers would understand that Umno and the government were not an arena for a leader to act according to his whims and fancies.

Anwar said the recent action against some part members represented a firm move to clean up Umno of any menace which could weaken the party and the nation.

"The Prime Minister before going on leave sent a message to me that there should be no compromise in the firm measures to wipe out corruption ...immaterial whether it involved big leaders in Umno or the Barisan Nasional component parties or top government officers," Anwar said.

"Hence we are now beginning from the top...not just focusing on those taking two or three hundred ringgit and allowing the big ones to escape...the address of a person will be of no help anymore," he said.

Anwar said Umno under the leadership of Dr Mahathir would continue with the struggle to defend and uphold the teachings of Islam and also ensure justice to all communities in Malaysia.

He said the Umno leadership wanted to see the party remain strong and that its leaders understood that they were entrusted with the responsibility to protect the people and ensure their wellbeing.

"What will become of the Malays if the leaders entrusted to safeguard their interests commit breach of trust and engage in irregularities and use their power to enrich themselves and discard their responsibilities to society," he said.

He said the national economy would not develop and expand if the moral values of the leaders and society were were at a low ebb.

"We have to ensure that our leadership is clean and we do not want things to happen like in some other countries... when the economy is expanding corruption sets in among the leaders," he said.

On this realisation and fear, the Umno leadership felt that stern action should be continued to rid the party of unhealthy elements.

He said: " Umno is not a place for a leader to seek comfort and to be lazy to serve the people."

"If they want to amass wealth, it is better for them to quit and concentrate on business."

Anwar later inspected the Samak Aquaculture Sdn Bhd tiger prawn breeding project in Kerpan before leaving for Perlis. -- BERNAMA

MFJ AAM