

05 NOV 1997

Parliament-Rashid Hussain

RASHID HUSSAIN WASN'T INVOLVED IN SHORT-SELING, SAYS ANWAR

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 5 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim today said that prominent corporate leader Tan Sri Rashid Hussain was not involved in short selling activities when the ringgit and the Kuala Lumpur Stock Exchange fell sharply recently.

Anwar, who is also Finance Minister, said investigations by the Securities Commission revealed that rumours on his alleged involvement in such activities were unfounded.

"I believe that such rumours have been spread by envious entrepreneurs. We cannot allow Parliament to entertain malicious rumours incited by competing companies," he said when winding up debate on the 1998 Budget for the Prime Minister's Department and the Treasury.

Anwar had answered questions raised by Members of Parliament on Rashid's credibility as a member of the board of directors of Khazanah Nasional Bhd, a government-owned investment body, because it was alleged that Rashid had betrayed the nation by engaging in short selling and caused the ringgit and share prices on the KLSE to fall recently.

The deputy prime minister said MPs should be fair to Rashid as he was selected by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to be on Khazanah Nasional's board based on his investment experience and skills.

"To be fair at this stage, there are no grounds to doubt his (Rashid's) integrity.

"We leave it to the prime minister to appoint representatives on government bodies, including Khazanah Nasional because we need the available skills and expertise," Anwar said.

On a question from Datuk Badruddin Amiruldin (BN-Yan) who said Rashid may use his position in Khazanah Nasional for his own business advantage, Anwar said the government investment body had its own tight conditions and procedures in any decision-making.

He said the question of Rashid using his position had been raised before the prime minister in the past and Dr Mahathir did not plan to make any decision in relation to Rashid's position in Khazanah Nasional.

Anwar also said the government did not plan to issue guidelines to prevent those in business from becoming directors of Khazanah Nasional. --
BERNAMA

AH HJ SHY rn