

17 JUN 1997

Sukom-Hashim

SUKOM CHIEF WITHDRAWS RESIGNATION

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 17 (Bernama) -- Jen (Rtd) Tan Sri Hashim Mohamed Ali today withdrew his resignation letter as executive chairman of Sukom Ninety Eight Bhd after meeting Acting Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim today.

Hashim, who tendered the letter to Anwar yesterday, said he also changed his mind after consulting members of his family following his half-hour meeting with Anwar at the Prime Minister's Department here.

"The reason I withdraw (the resignation) is a result of the humble request from the Acting Prim Minister," he told reporters after attending a sponsorship signing ceremony between Sukom and the Taylor's School of Management.

He also said that Anwar will announce tomorrow "new ground rules" after the Cabinet meeting but he declined to elaborate.

Youth and Sports Minister Tan Sri Muhyiddin Yassin and Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Sabbaruddin Chik had taken Sukom to task for the lack of publicity for the Games.

The 62-year-old former Armed Forces chief who has been at the helm of Sukom since 1992 dropped a bombshell yesterday when he announced in tears that he had submitted his resignation effective July 1 following criticisms from two Cabinet ministers over the lack of publicity for the Games.

Hashim said today that Anwar had asked him to think the matter over "very seriously" and reminded him of the implications and the damage that would be caused to the Games and country if he resigned now.

"Anwar said the government and everyone cannot see me leaving and short of directing, he asked me to stay.

"In view of the implications, considering also that I have respect for the Acting Prime Minister and my full confidence in him, I will remain," said Hashim.

Hashim said he was called by Anwar this morning and during the meeting, the Acting Prime Minister expressed regret and concern over what had happened over the past few days.

Asked if the implications had crossed his mind earlier, Hashim replied: "No. There was a lot of criticisms so I felt that enough is enough."

When asked if Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was informed of his intention to resign, Hashim said: "Since the Prime Minister is on leave and there is an acting Prime Minister...so I consulted him."

Hashim said he could not sleep yesterday.

"A high proportion of my senior staff wants to resign too. I've got a fanstastic team in Sukom and if a high proportion of the staff leaves, the Games are gone. It is very difficult to replace them in a short period," he added.

Hashim said Anwar told him that he had tried to contact him in Hong Kong last week after the press reports. Hashim, who was in Hong Kong to make a presentation on Kuala Lumpur's preparations for the Games, said he did not get Anwar's message.

"As an individual, I am nobody and no one is indispensable. The plan is there, I can go, somebody can take over," he said.

Yesterday, Sabbaruddin said his remarks were made in good faith and apologised if the criticisms had hurt Hashim.

Asked by reporters on that, Hashim said: "Did he make that? I was only told that it appeared in the newspapers. I don't know, you wrote it but I

don't know if it actually came from him."

On suggestions that he may have over-reacted, Hashim said no matter what he did, there would still be people who would say something about it.

Hashim defended Sukom and said that his organisation was not sensitive to criticisms. Sukom welcomed criticisms but "not insults in the newspaper".

Asked if he expected to come back, Hashim said: "What changed my heart is the Acting Prime Minister."

On whether his move was pre-planned for publicity, Hashim answered in a light vein that it had gained him wide-spread coverage abroad and at home.

"We will ensure that this will be the best Commonwealth Games ever with or without publicity or banners or billboards," he said, taking another dig at criticisms that not enough banners or billboards are on display. --

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