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Tajudin withdraws suit against Kadir

MALAYSIA Airlines chairman Tan Sri Tajudin Ramli has agreed not to press ahead with the RM80 million libel suit against a deputy minister, Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim says.

"Tajudin phoned me from London to say that he will withdraw the suit," Anwar told reporters at the Parliament lobby yesterday.

Malaysia Airlines had threatened to sue Deputy Human Resources Minister Datuk Kadir Sheikh Fadzir over a press statement that it claimed had put the airline in bad light.

Anwar said Tajudin also agreed to retract a letter he sent to Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik. The letter was in response to comments made by Dr Ling on the national carrier's shortcomings at the height of the haze problem.

As such, Anwar said he regarded the problem between Malaysia Airlines and the deputy minister as over.

The Government, he said, will continue to support Malaysia Airlines to improve its services or expand its operations.

Anwar also said that he met Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on the matter yesterday morning. He had met Tajudin on Saturday.

Earlier when met by reporters after briefing Members of Parliament on the 1998 Budget, Anwar said the Government wanted an amicable solution to the problem between Malaysia Airlines and Kadir.

"I believe we can find an amicable solution. I acknowledge the steps taken by Malaysia Airlines to improve its services," Anwar said.

He also said that Dr Ling's "constructive criticism" should be respected.

On whether the Government should review privatized projects to enable it to have more say, Anwar said this was not necessary. "No, I don't think so. This one small episode should not disrupt or frustrate other measures.

"For now, our position is quite clear. The minister should be given the right to express some concern because the particular experience with the haze was unprecedented and was seen to be quite an enormous problem," he said.

"Notwithstanding that, we certainly recognise the measures taken by Malaysia Airlines personnel... I think they are doing their best.

"What we suggest therefore is that... Malaysia Airlines should also appreciate the concern expressed by the minister concerned or some other members of the administration," he said.

(END)