

# Cabinet colleagues: It's PM's prerogative

MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik said the party respected Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's decision to sack Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim as Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister.

"We respect his decision because we have chosen him as our Prime Minister and it is his prerogative," he said.

MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said that in a democratic system, Cabinet appointments were the prerogative of the Prime Minister.

"We respect the prerogative of the Prime Minister and his decision. The decision by Dr Mahathir is in line with the powers vested according to the Constitution."

Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik said he was shocked by the announcement although rumours about the resignation had been going around lately.

Dr Lim, who is Primary Industries Minister, said it was Dr Mahathir's prerogative to appoint or remove ministers.

"I hope that this will end the rumours so that we can continue the fight to revive our economy," he said.

Education Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak called on the people and Umno members to be calm and to place national and party interests above all else.

"I believe that Dr Mahathir had studied the factors careful-

ly before making a decision."

Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Sabbaruddin Chik said the Prime Minister had the absolute right to appoint or remove Cabinet ministers.

"The Prime Minister decides on the appointment of his ministers and he has every right to decide to sack them," he said.

Asked whether Anwar's position as Umno deputy president would be affected by the sacking, Sabbaruddin who is also party secretary-general said:

"His party position is not affected as far as I am concerned."

Domestic Trade and Consumer Affairs Minister Datuk Megat Junid Megat Ayob expressed his sadness over Anwar's sacking.

"I feel sad because this is happening at a time when the country is facing an economic slowdown," he said.

"It's a big loss as he is a potential leader," said Megat Junid, who is also an Umno supreme council member.

He said, however, that he was not surprised at the decision to remove Anwar.

Defence Minister Datuk Syed Hamid Albar said he believed the Prime Minister had enough information to act against Anwar in the national interest.

He hoped that Umno members would support Dr Mahathir's action.