

ANWAR SACKED

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He is relieved of his posts as Deputy PM and Finance Minister

KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim was sacked as Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister at **5.30pm** yesterday.

A three-paragraph statement from the Prime Minister's Department said the Yang diPertuan Agong Tuanku Ja'afar had been informed of Anwar's removal.

Rut no reason was given for the sacking which ended months of speculation on Anwar's position following reports of a widening rift between him and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

At a press conference at Bukit Aman last night, Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Noor said Anwar was under investigation with regards to allegations made in the book *50 Dalil Kenapa Anwar Tidak Boleh Jadi PM*.

He said investigations were based on police reports lodged by four people, including Anwar.

"Up till now he has not been arrested, nor is he under house arrest," he added.

No immediate response could be obtained from Anwar, 51.

Policemen took up positions as Umno members and journalists gathered outside his residence in Jalan Damansara yesterday afternoon, hours before the statement was issued.

By 5.30pm, the road to his house had been sealed and at 7pm, the Prime Minister's letter was delivered to Anwar.

Shortly after, his wife Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail was seen driving out alone.

According to Anwar's supporters, she drove to the Prime Minister's official residence, 100m away, and left before 8pm.

Five days ago, Anwar had told reporters after meeting his Permatang Pauh supporters in Penang that he was not resigning.

Dr Mahathir had also said on Tuesday after announcing his measures to regain control of the ringgit that Anwar had not resigned but if his deputy gave "a very good reason, I will have to accept (it)."

As a student leader, Anwar was detained in 1974 under the Internal Security Act for two years and was internationally known as president of the Malaysian Muslim Youth Movement (Abim).

Once an outspoken critic of the Government, he was persuaded by Dr Mahathir to join Umno in 1982. He contested for the Permatang Pauh seat in 1982 and became Umno Youth chief the same year.

That year he was also made Deputy Minister in

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Umno may discuss Anwar's post today

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the Prime Minister's Department, marking his meteoric rise as a leader, and culminating in his appointment as Deputy Prime Minister on Dec 1, 1993, to succeed 'Pun Abdul Ghafar Baba.

Anwar's dismissal extends to all his other positions held in

his capacity as Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister, including Cabinet committee posts and the National Economic Action Council (NEAC) deputy chairmanship.

His position as Umno deputy president is likely to be discussed by the party's supreme council which has brought for-

ward its meeting scheduled for Sept 8 to today.

Once described as heir apparent to Dr Mahathir, Anwar was seen to be sidelined when Tun Daim Zainuddin was appointed NEAC chairman and later Special Functions Minister after the Umno general assembly in June.

Till press time, tight security was maintained outside Seri Perdana and Anwar's houses here and in Penang and journalists camped overnight outside the places.

Response to the sacking from other leaders ranged from "no comment" to calls for calm.