

# Anwar: I'm not resigning as minister

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By PHILIP GOLINGAI

KUALA LUMPUR: Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has dismissed rumours that he will be resigning as Finance Minister, and asked the people not to believe such talk.

"I do not have good news for you (reporters). There is no basis to the rumours," he said.

"The appointment of any member of the Cabinet is the sole prerogative of the Prime Minister," he told reporters after giving a press conference on corporate debt restructuring at the Treasury here. (See *Star Business* for story)

Anwar said it was difficult to

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deal with the rumours as the Prime Minister had made statements on the matter.

Talk had been rife that Anwar would resign following an alleged rift with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

When his office called for a press conference yesterday, the market was again rife with such speculation.

"There is no rift between us. We meet on a daily basis and decisions are made together," Anwar said.

Asked whether the talk of a rift between him and Dr Mahathir would affect the economy, Anwar said:

"If there is no rift in the first

place, I don't think it will affect, but of course, you cannot stop people from instigating or discussing or spreading rumours on uncertainty.

"For example, I called for this press conference on corporate debt restructuring but I hear that some people believed that this (press conference) could be related to my position as finance minister."

Anwar said the question on the sphere of influence or relation of responsibilities should not be brought up.

"It is a joint effort. We discuss and deliberate on major issues together and the focus should be on economic recovery," he said.

"I want to reiterate that we meet on a daily basis and decisions are made together as the Prime Minister is the chairman of the NEAC (National Economic Action Council).

"We take cognisance of his views and concerns. The executive committee, which includes the Prime Minister, myself and Tun Daim (Zainuddin), meets and we express our views very frankly," he said.

Anwar said he would normally have a chat with Dr Mahathir on political issues and other issues not related to the NEAC.

"That is the position, how am I to ensure more when everyday I hear from the media that it is on the contrary," he said.