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Anwar-Bank Negara

ANWAR DENIES MORE TOP BANK NEGARA OFFICIALS QUITTING

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 29 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim today denied more top officials of Bank Negara Malaysia were quitting their posts following the resignations of the central bank's governor Tan Sri Ahmad Mohd Don and his deputy Datuk Fong Weng Phak.

Anwar, who is also Finance Minister, said this when asked to comment on foreign news reports of more resignations by the central bank's top officials after officiating the National Horse Show '98 at the STC Equestrian and Sports Centre here.

"I do not have any information about other top Bank Negara officials quitting," he said.

Anwar said that he, together with senior officials from the central bank had a meeting with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad this morning where the officials gave the assurance they would cooperate in continuing national efforts to revive the economy.

He also said the government has yet to decide on a successor to Ahmad Don whose resignation takes effect on Tuesday.

However, he expressed confidence in the central bank's assistant governor, Datuk Dr Zeti Akhtar Aziz, 51, who has been appointed acting governor, in discharging her duties well.

"To-date, we have already received the consent of Yang di-Pertuan Agong that Dr Zeti would be acting Bank Negara governor," he said.

Anwar said: "We should not listen to speculation by the foreign media, instead we should focus our attention in solving the country's economic problems."

Asked how long Dr Zeti would be acting governor, he said the matter does not arise and has not been determined yet.

Anwar said that the government has yet to finalise a schedule but he does not have any problem in giving an opportunity and the space needed for her to discharge her duties.

Asked what were the reasons given by Ahmad Don and Fong for their resignations, Anwar said: "No reasons were given."

He said the resignations were agreed to jointly and accepted after discussions with the Prime Minister.

"When the letter of resignations were submitted, they were firm with their decisions. I accepted them and consulted the prime minister and we agreed that we should accept their resignations," he said.

Anwar said the letters were submitted a few days ago.

Asked what was his advice to those who thought of the current developments as a political manoeuvre, Anwar said "We cannot stop them from speculating, but I think we have to perform a job and have to be responsible."

"We have a task (to do) and I am sure the economy will rebound and we will have to proceed with a common stance and stay united as Malaysians.

"We will support the prime minister and the government in these measures. I don't think we can stop the speculation. We should be focussed on reviving our economy," he said.

Meanwhile, a Bank Negara spokesperson, when asked to comment on reports of more resignations, denied that more top officials were quitting their posts.

Replying to a Bernama query, the official said that foreign wire reports to that effect did not originate from authorised spokespersons of

the central bank.

Meanwhile, Bank Negara Malaysia adviser for public affairs Wan Norhiyati Wan Ibrahim said a foreign newsreport that she was quitting from the central bank was wrong.

She said that it was mere coincidence that her contract with Bank Negara was expiring on Monday, having been seconded from Malayan Banking Bhd for a four-year term beginning Sept 1, 1994.

-- BERNAMA

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