

19 SEP 1998

Mohamed-Anwar

ANWAR HAS NO RIGHT TO CHALLENGE DR M TO QUIT - MOHAMED RAHMAT

KUALA LUMPUR, Sept 19 (Bernama) -- Former Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim has no right to challenge Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to step down as it is the people's right to decide.

Information Minister Datuk Mohamed Rahmat said Umno had given a big mandate to Dr Mahathir as party president.

"What he (Anwar) is saying is his personal right. As long as party members supported and have confidence in Dr Mahathir, the right cannot be taken away by others... the people indeed have the right," he said.

He was commenting on Anwar's statement in Kuala Terengganu yesterday that Dr Mahathir should step down because he refused to heed the advice from those around him.

Earlier, Mohamed visited the Tele Multimedia Communication Station, Kumpulan Sub Tek (comprising police, fire and rescue department and the emergency rescue squad (Smart), National Stadium and International Zone at Bukit Jalil here today.

He said Umno members and the people have pledged overwhelming support for Dr Mahathir.

Their support would not wane even though there were challenges, said Mohamed, who is also the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) secretary-general.

"Wait for the general election (to see) whether his (Anwar) call to Dr Mahathir to resign will be accepted or rejected by the people," he said.

Mohamed said Dr Mahathir had carried out his responsibilities well and Umno wanted him to continue as party president and Prime Minister.

"As for me, Dr Mahathir has to be there and we pray to God for his good health to enable him to complete his mission for the nation," he added.

Meanwhile, in MELAKA, former deputy prime minister Tun Ghafar Baba said Anwar had challenged Dr Mahathir to step down for his own personal reasons and not in the interest of the people.

"Only Anwar has asked Dr Mahathir to resign, other people want the prime minister to be strong, healthy and to continue to lead," he told reporters after a meeting with Umno veterans in Ayer Keroh to explain the economic situation.

He said that if there were people who wanted Dr Mahathir to resign as prime minister, the most effective way would be to make the call through the Barisan Nasional (BN) "but I have not heard anyone, be he a BN member or leader, asking Dr Mahathir to resign."

Ghafar said the country must always come first in any struggle, the country was more important than the party and the party more important than the self.

Describing Anwar's campaigning all over the country for reforms as unhealthy, he said Anwar had an open forum, namely the courts, to express his dissatisfaction.

-- BERNAMA

NO JK