

10/09/1998

Anwar: Reason given not a surprise

Eirmalasang Bani

DATUK Seri Anwar Ibrahim said he had expected "moral misconduct" to be used as the reason for him to be dismissed from his Cabinet and party posts.

"It was discussed during the Umno Supreme Council meeting last week. It is not new," he said when addressing his supporters at his house in Bukit Damansara yesterday.

He was asked to comment on the statement made by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Wednesday.

Dr Mahathir, at a briefing for Umno divisional Wanita and Youth leaders, said Anwar was removed from government and party posts based on moral grounds, not economic or political differences.

Asked whether he was satisfied with the explanation, Anwar said: "I don't want to comment.

"All I want is to discuss with the people. You (the reporter who asked the question) discuss with the Prime Minister," he said.

Asked whether there is a possibility of a reconciliation between him and Dr Mahathir, Anwar said: "I did not divorce him, he divorced me."

Anwar also said he believed that many prominent figures are not visiting him for fear of being blacklisted.

He also refuted Dr Mahathir's statement that he is purposely trying to gain sympathy from the public and is asking to be arrested.

"I don't want to be arrested. I have enough experience on this," he said.

Later at a press conference, Anwar said he has yet to receive any notice from the Umno Supreme Council on his expulsion from the party.

Asked how he was emotionally, Anwar said: "I have been dismissed for a week and how am I taking it emotionally?"

"I must say that I am coping very well. Of course, my routine has somewhat changed. I am not in the position to leave the house with the stream of visitors ... but I'm eternally grateful to the public, a few corporate leaders and even some politicians who have given me the opportunity to explain."

He also said that he has to learn to accept his present situation.

(END)