

03/09/1998

Anwar removed as DPM, Finance Minister

DATUK Seri Anwar Ibrahim has been removed as Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister, and all posts he was holding in those capacities.

The Prime Minister's Department, in a three-paragraph statement released to Bernama late yesterday, said Anwar no longer held these posts from 5.30pm yesterday. The Yang di-Pertuan Agong has been informed.

A letter in this effect was delivered to Anwar at his residence by a top government official at about 7pm.

The letter, dated September 2 1998, reads:

"It is hereby announced that Yang Berhormat Dato' Seri Anwar bin Ibrahim has been removed from his posts as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, and also other positions held by Yang Berhormat Dato' Seri Anwar in his capacity as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance.

"The removal of his posts takes effect today, September 2 1998 at 5.30pm.

"Seri Paduka Baginda Yang di-Pertuan Agong has been informed of his removal from the posts."

The statement did not give any reason for the dismissal.

Anwar's fate as Umno deputy president is expected to be known when the party's supreme council meets tonight. The meeting was originally scheduled for September 8.

The party's ruling body is expected to either suspend his membership or remove him altogether.

There is no immediate comment from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad or Anwar.

Anwar, 51, succeeded Tun Ghafar Baba as the Deputy Prime Minister in December 1 1993. He was appointed Finance Minister on March 15 1991, replacing Tun Daim Zainuddin.

He was brought into the Government in 1982 in a move seen as a political coup by Dr Mahathir. Anwar was then appointed as Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department.

Between 1983 and 1991, he held several Cabinet portfolios: Culture, Youth and Sports Minister (1983-1984), Agriculture Minister (1984-1986) and Education Minister (1986-1991).

He also served as acting Prime Minister and Home Minister for three months from May 9 1997 when Dr Mahathir took a three-month leave.

Anwar was also the chairman of the Cabinet Committee on Malpractices in the Government, deputy chairman of the National Information Technology Council and deputy president of the National Telecommunication Council.

Earlier this year, he was appointed deputy chairman of the National Economic Action Council (NEAC).

He was named chairman of the Development Council of the World Bank/International Monetary Fund in April this year for a two-year term.

He has been president of the International Islamic University since 1988.

Anwar joined Umno in 1982 and rose to become the party's vice-president from 1987 to November 4 1993.

He made Umno deputy president effective November 4 1993 after Ghafar resigned from the post in October of that year. He was also chairman of the party's management and discipline committee and an Umno trustee.

Anwar is the Permatang Pauh Member of Parliament, having won the seat in 1982 and the following general elections since.

Late last night, Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Noor, speaking at a press conference, said Anwar was not under arrest.

"He is free to leave the house," he said.

Abdul Rahim said investigations are currently under way based on the police reports made about the book entitled "50 Dalil Mengapa Anwar Tidak Boleh Jadi PM ("50 Reasons Why Anwar Cannot Become PM").

He said police have sealed Anwar's offices at the Prime Minister's Department and the Finance Ministry.

Abdul Rahim said the situation is under control and that the police will "act according to the situation".

"Based on the reports, besides the crowd at the residence of the Prime Minister and Anwar, there are no signs of tension in the country," he said.