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ANWAR-RUMOURS

ANWAR SAYS HE IS STILL IN CHARGE OF FINANCE MINISTRY

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 7 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim says he is firmly in charge of the Finance Ministry and there is no basis to rumours that has been circulating of his imminent resignation as Finance Minister.

Anwar called on the people not to entertain such rumours saying "I have heard these (rumours) going on for some time now from the media."

"I do not have good news for you...there is no basis for these rumours," he said.

The appointment of any member of the Cabinet is the sole prerogative of the Prime Minister, he said.

"There is no rift between us...we meet on a daily basis and decisions are made together," he added.

"As Prime Minister and chairman of the National Economic Action Council (NEAC), we take cognisance of his views," he said.

He said: "The NEAC executive committee comprising the Prime Minister, Tun Daim Zainuddin and myself meet to discuss issues frankly."

"Normally, I would have a chat with him on issues not related to NEAC."

"I assure you (that) on the contrary (there is no rift between us)."

When pressed further as to whether he was firmly in charge of his ministry, Anwar said: "Yes, in a way, but you should also appreciate we are dealing with a very difficult situation which involves the entire Cabinet."

He said the NEAC meets daily and it "certainly includes the Prime Minister."

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

Asked whether the talk of rift between him and Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad would affect the economy, Anwar said "if there is no rift in the first place, I don't think it will affect (it), 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 believe that this (press conference) could be related to my position as Finance Minister," he said

"What do I do...I did explain, okaylah, sudahlah (that's enough), tanyalah soalan-soalan yang menyeronokkan (why don't you ask more interesting questions)," he said.--BERNAMA

DVS HS MR