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LEAD Anwar-Deny

ANWAR SAYS HE'S NOT RESIGNING AS FINANCE MINISTER

KUALA LUMPUR, Aug 7 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim says he is firmly in charge of the Finance Ministry and there is no basis to rumours that he will resign as Finance Minister.

Anwar, who is also Deputy Prime Minister, called on the people not to entertain such rumours saying "I have this (the rumours) going on for some time now from the media."

"I do not have good news for you...there is no basis to these rumours," he told a press conference at the Treasury today.

There has been market talk that Anwar may be resigning as Finance Minister allegedly following a rift with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

When his office called for a press conference at 4 pm today, the market was again rife with such speculations.

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

Asked whether the talk of a rift between him and Dr Mahathir would affect the economy, Anwar said: " If there is no rift in the first place, I don't think it will affect, 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 believed that this (press conference) could be related to my position as finance minister."

He said the executive committee of the National Economic Action Council (NEAC) met daily to discuss issues focusing on efforts to achieve economic recovery.

Anwar said the executive committee comprising the Prime Minister, Special Functions Minister Tun Daim Zainuddin and himself met to discuss issues frankly.

He said he would take cognizance of Dr Mahathir's views, adding that "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 the finance ministry (following Daim's recent appointment to the Cabinet), Anwar said: "Yes, but you should also appreciate we are dealing with a very difficult situation which involves the entire Cabinet".

Anwar said the appointment of any member of the Cabinet was the sole prerogative of the Prime Minister.

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