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Anwar-Indonesia

ANWAR TO MEET PRESIDENT SUHARTO TOMORROW

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 4 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim will meet President Suharto of Indonesia in Jakarta tomorrow to discuss and "compare notes" on the present economic situation.

The visit is "just to keep the Indonesian authorities particularly President Suharto abreast with what we are doing here and what measures we are taking and also to listen to him," he told reporters here today.

Anwar, who would call on Suharto at his residential palace in the evening, is also scheduled to meet Indonesian Finance Minister Mari'e Muhammad.

Asked if Indonesia was seeking advice from Malaysia, he said: "No, we are explaining...taking the liberty as neighbours to follow up on what Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has talked to Suharto two weeks back."

Anwar, who is also Finance Minister, said he would also explain to the Indonesian leaders the measures that Malaysia had taken in the wake of the economic crisis that hit the region in later part of last year.

"Normally, we do compare notes," he said.

The visit is the latest in a series of meetings between the region's leaders in the past few weeks.

Dr Mahathir met Suharto last month and then held talks with Singapore Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong. He is scheduled to leave for Bangkok tomorrow, followed by visits to Manila and Singapore.

Anwar, who is also scheduled to visit Japan later this month, said the finance ministers of Asean countries would also be meeting this month.

He said the meeting would be held "very soon" and the dates were being worked out.

Anwar earlier opened the Third Regional Conference on Ethics in Leadership, which is jointly organised by the Institute of Strategic and International Studies (ISIS) and the St James Ethics Centre of Australia.

In his speech, he said the present economic crisis in the region should not be viewed apologetically.

Instead, he said, Asian countries should use this period to transform themselves into a stronger region and also to continue the process of "learning and unlearning".

"We should not stop listening and adjusting, and we should go on improving and having us transform into a stronger one," he said.

Anwar said countries in the region should review and reassess their present situation and should also consider greater transparency in ensuring good governance.

"With all that is said and done during the currency turmoil, we will see a new Asia, more confident, with strong economy and strong ethics and moral concern. If we ignore this issue, we ignore it to our own peril," he said.

The conference themed "an exploration of the ethical obligations of leaders as they weigh up their duty to past, present and future generations" is being attended by business and academic leaders from around the region. -- BERNAMA

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