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Anwar-Suharto

ANWAR TO MEET SUHARTO DURING ASEAN FINANCE MINISTERS MEETING IN JAKARTA

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 27 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim is expected to meet President Suharto in Jakarta during the Asean Finance Ministers meeting beginning in the Indonesian capital today.

Anwar told reporters this after meeting Yves Fortier, the envoy despatched by United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan to Malaysia to resolve the legal wrangle involving UN special rapporteur Datuk Param Cumaraswamy.

He later left for Jakarta to attend the two-day meeting.

Anwar also said that he had not received any instruction from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad on his trip to Jakarta.

While there, Anwar and his counterparts will study new measures taken by member countries in dealing with the regional currency and economic crisis.

Anwar said last week that the ministers would also discuss the measures and the cooperation by Japan and Taiwan in helping affected members in dealing with the crisis.

At their last meeting here in December, the ministers approved a private debt instrument to mobilise, with the assistance of international financial institutions, private sector resources to help countries avoid attacks on currencies.

Among the grouping's members affected by the crisis, Indonesia and Thailand were the most badly affected and have received financial assistance from the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

Though in a better position, Malaysia has taken bold measures to cut costs as well as curb credit growth to ensure loans only go to the productive sectors such as manufacturing and agriculture.

It is also looking into mechanisms to liberalise foreign equity ownership in Malaysian companies as well as cash-rich local companies buying into financially-troubled companies. -- BERNAMA

MR ES JK