

05 SEP 1998

Anwar-Mosque

DO NOT USE MOSQUES TO DRAW ATTENTION TO ANWAR'S EXPULSION

KUALA TERENGGANU, Sept 5 (Bernama) -- Umno Information Chief Datuk Dr Yusof Nor today urged the people not to use mosques, suraus and the instrument of "Sembahyang Hajat" to draw attention among Muslims to the expulsion of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim as Umno deputy president and from the party.

Speaking at a news conference at his office here, he said mosques, suraus and other places of Islamic worship as well as "Sembahyang Hajat" should be for good purposes as exhorted by Islam and not to advance personal interests founded on untruths.

"Misuse of mosques can confuse the people particularly during the present economic and political situation," he said.

Yusof said he had received information that groups were making use of the "Sembahyang Hajat" over the issue of Anwar's expulsion from Umno.

This would only confuse the people, he said.

In IPOH, Perak Menteri Besar Tan Sri Ramli Ngah Talib has directed all mosque and surau committees in the state not to allow their premises and their compounds to be used for political talks except for information campaigns by the government.

"Mosques and suraus are not allowed to be used for political ceramahs or for making explanations to defend oneself except for information campaigns by the government," he told reporters.

Ramli earlier held a closed-door meeting with 120 Members of Parliament and the Perak Legislative Assembly as well as heads of Federal and state departments to discuss preparations for the La Nina weather phenomenon which was expected to bring heavy rain and thunderstorms.

Ramli however said that he took the opportunity to explain that the sacking of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim as Deputy Prime Minister and his expulsion from Umno was a normal matter.

Ramli said Anwar was given the widest opportunity in line with democratic practices by the government and Umno to resign before being sacked as Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Finance and Umno deputy president.

"In other countries when a situation arises where a Minister cannot discharge his duties like as usual, he will naturally resign," he said.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had never sacked any minister but if he had decided on sacking surely the matter had reached a serious level and it was the last resort in the interest of the party, the people and the nation, Ramli added.

The Menteri Besar said he had explained the actual circumstances leading to the sacking of Anwar so that the people would not have negative feelings against the government.

--BERNAMA

LAT AAM