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Anwar-Habibie

ECONOMIC CRISIS HAS NOT UNDERMINED COUNTRIES' SOVEREIGNTY, SAYS ANWAR

KUALA LUMPUR, March 28 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim said tonight that the economic and financial crisis had not undermined the sovereignty and integrity of the countries in this region.

As such, Malaysia from the very beginning had said that it supported the wisdom and leadership of President Suharto to make a wise decision, he said when speaking at a dinner in honour of visiting Indonesian vice-president B.J. Habibie at a leading hotel, here.

He said Malaysia and Indonesia were in the midst of negotiations to step up bilateral trade, investments and cooperation in the field of research, science, education and culture.

Anwar said Habibie's meeting with Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir tomorrow was to seek a consensus on ways to tackle the currency crisis before the two leaders attend the Second Asia-Europe (ASEM) meeting in London next week.

" We must ensure that we are not played around by foreign currency speculators but should take pro-active measures to establish a fair and effective international currency system."

" We should not allow this region to be the playground for foreigners to speculate and manipulate," said Anwar, who is also Finance Minister.

In his speech, Habibie, who made an overnight stop-over here today en route to London, said there was a lot of prejudice against the Indonesian leadership and him.

" I'm appealing to all to set aside or at least minimise the prejudices," he said.

He urged the International community to see the Indonesian government and the people in the right perspective.

He said Indonesia was confident of getting out of its problems as soon as possible and was working towards this end.

He said although there was character assassination, history would prove Indonesia right. -- BERNAMA

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