

19/09/1998

Ex-DPM's removal `to prevent further damage'

Nik Imran Abdullah; Hayati Hayatudin

PASIR MAS, Fri. - Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's removal from Government and party posts is to prevent Umno's image from being tarnished in the eyes of other Barisan Nasional component parties, Gua Musang MP Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah said today.

He said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is Umno president and BN chairman, did not want Umno's image to be marred by the allegations against Anwar as the party was the BN's backbone.

Tengku Razaleigh said Anwar was dismissed because Dr Mahathir believed it would prevent further damage to the party.

"It is not to safeguard Dr Mahathir's position but for the interests of the people and the nation," he said.

Tengku Razaleigh said it was important that Umno continue to earn respect from the BN component parties and the people.

"I think Dr Mahathir has carried out his responsibility and the question of whether the dismissal is fair or not should not arise," he said at a ceramah to explain the reason behind Anwar's expulsion, organised by the Pasir Mas Umno division last night.

Also present were Umno supreme council member Senator Datuk Ibrahim Ali and State BN information chief Datuk Rozali Isohak.

Tengku Razaleigh said Umno members must support the decision because it was done in accordance with the party constitution and the wisdom of the supreme council.

He also said that Dr Mahathir had the right under the Federal Constitution to appoint or remove any member of the Cabinet, including his deputy.

"We should also accept the fact that no one can permanently be in the Government," he said, adding that the post of deputy prime minister was not provided for in the Federal Constitution.

At the same ceramah, Ibrahim said Anwar should not take his personal problems to the people as this would not help clear his name.

He said Anwar's expulsion was different from that of other members, including Dr Mahathir.

"Unlike Dr Mahathir who fought for a cause, his (Anwar)'s dismissal has got nothing to do with the people's struggle."

(END)