

02 DEC 1998

Meeting-Procedures

GOVT, UMNO NEED TO REVIEW PROCEDURES ON RECORDINGS OF MEETINGS

KUALA LUMPUR, Dec 2 (Bernama) -- The government and Umno need to review the procedures on recordings of closed-door meetings to prevent secrets from being leaked out, according to Utusan Malaysia today.

The daily felt the act of leaking the tape recordings on the proceedings of the crucial Sept 3 Umno Supreme Council meeting, which decided to expel Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim from Umno, must be nipped in the bud.

"In the interests of the safety and integrity of those attending meetings, the act of leaking out recordings of meetings as can be seen now, must be rooted out immediately," the newspaper said in its editorial.

The newspaper pointed out that this was not the first time recordings of closed-door meetings had been made available to the public.

In July, cassette tape recordings of the meeting between Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and the Islamic Law Coordination Committee held at Pusat Islam were also widely distributed to the public.

Civil servants or party members found to have leaked out secrets must be dealt with severely as it was an unhealthy trend to the country and government administration, it said.

It also raised questions on what would be the consequences if tape recordings of secret and sensitive government or defence meetings land in the hands of foreigners.

The paper said upholding secrecy and confidentiality are the tenets of a disciplined administration.

"If secrets cannot be safeguarded, with people leaking them here and there, it is not surprising if in future the government and the country faced serious threats economically, politically and in defence," it said.

Cassette tape recordings of the closed-door Supreme Council meeting of Umno, the backbone party of the ruling Barisan Nasional (BN) coalition, which are widely sold by the roadside at RM8 a tape should not be allowed at all.

Not only the opposition parties could exploit the tapes, the two-hour recording had also been inserted with commentaries on the discussions of the council meeting which discussed Anwar's alleged sexual misconduct, it added.

-- BERNAMA

MNY TS