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Mahathir-Post

KING INFORMED OF DECISION TO SACK ANWAR, SAYS MAHATHIR

KUALA LUMPUR, Oct 23 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said today he had conveyed his decision to sack Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim as Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister to Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Ja'afar.

The King did not voice any objection when informed of the decision, the Prime Minister said in the Dewan Rakyat.

"The Yang di-Pertuan Agong accepted it and thereafter a (new) list of Cabinet ministers was announced," said Dr Mahathir when clarifying his position as First Finance Minister.

He made the clarification in response to opposition MP Karpal Singh's contention that that he (Dr Mahathir) was not the lawful Finance Minister and therefore not eligible to present the 1999 Budget.

Karpal cited Article 43 (5) of the Federal Constitution which says ministers other than the Prime Minister hold their posts for as long as the Yang di-Pertuan Agong consents, unless the King revokes their appointments on the advice of the Prime Minister or they resign from the posts.

Karpal (DAP-Jelutong), who raised the matter before the motion on the Supplies Bill 1999 was tabled, said Anwar was still the Finance Minister as he had not resigned from the post.

He said the posts of First Finance Minister and Second Finance Minister (held by Datuk Mustapa Mohamed) were invalid.

Karpal also asked if the Yang di-Pertuan Agong had revoked Anwar's appointment and if the revocation had been gazetted.

"I have conveyed my decision. Whether it amounts to advice or not is up to the Yang Berhormat (Karpal). But in my opinion, it is an advice to the Yang di-Pertuan Agong," said Dr Mahathir.

Karpal's argument drew objections from government MPs who felt it was a waste of time and wanted the Budget presentation to begin.

Speaker Tun Mohamed Zahir Ismail, asking Karpal to stop his speech, said in his opinion the Budget presentation was not affected by whether the revocation was gazetted or not.

Anwar was removed from the Cabinet and Umno early last month. He is currently held at the Sungai Buloh prison pending his Nov 2 trial on four of 10 charges of corrupt practices and sodomy.

-- BERNAMA

RAZ/NHD SK