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Najib: The issue is his moral, personal problems

BALING, Sat. - Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said today Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim should not divert the people's attention by questioning Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's position as Prime Minister.

"The issue is Datuk Seri Anwar's moral and personal problems and it has nothing to do with the position of the Prime Minister," Najib, who is Education Minister, said.

Speaking after visiting a model school which is under construction, he said support for the Prime Minister was unanimous.

"The Prime Minister's position is not in question. According to our constitution, the position of the Prime Minister depends on the support of Members of Parliament and the MPs are solid in their support for Dr Mahathir," he said.

Najib added that Dr Mahathir had also received unanimous support from Umno supreme council members and delegates, and the mandate from the rakyat in the last general election.

He was responding to Anwar's call in Pantai Batu Buruk in Terengganu yesterday to the Prime Minister to resign, claiming that the latter no longer had the people's support.

Anwar was sacked from Umno for alleged moral misconduct.

On Anwar's claim that certain Umno leaders and members had blindly followed the Prime Minister, Najib said Cabinet decisions were made collectively.

He said Ministers were free to express their views in Cabinet meetings.

"Anwar knows the real atmosphere in the Cabinet meeting and that all decisions are made based on consensus," he added.

On his appointment as joint chairman of the Umno management and disciplinary committee, Najib thanked Dr Mahathir.

In Kuantan, Pahang Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohd Khalil Yaakob said: "What is Anwar's basis (for asking Dr Mahathir to resign)?"

"Anwar's demand has no basis, he should by now know the strong support voiced through the numerous pledges by the leaders and members of Umno and Barisan Nasional for Dr Mahathir," he said in a statement today.

He said it would be better for Anwar to concentrate on the allegations against him.

Mohd Khalil added that he was also shocked by Anwar's actions in associating himself with the DAP in his attempt to show his innocence.

In Pasir Salak, Perak Umno liaison committee chairman Tan Sri Ramli Ngah Talib also hit out at Anwar for aligning himself with the opposition.

Ramli described Anwar's move as inappropriate and that it was proof that he never was a "true" Umno member and had never truly committed himself to Umno's struggle.

He said Anwar had wasted his time in Parliament waging war with the Opposition and criticising them when he was in Umno as it was mere talk.

The same, Ramli said, could be described of Anwar's loyalty to Umno as "it is obvious that he never really cared for the party."

Speaking after launching the Pasir Salak Wanita Umno community programme at Kota Setia, he said Umno members and Anwar's followers should now condemn Anwar's move as he had shown himself to be an opportunist and disloyal to the principles of the party he once upheld.

"To criticise Umno and the Government is one thing but to align himself with the Opposition - that is an entirely different story.

"His actions have made people see him for what he really is," he said, adding that Anwar's actions had shattered people's faith and trust in him.

On Anwar's call to Dr Mahathir to step down, Ramli said it was a sign that Anwar had lost direction and was not thinking rationally.

When asked how the State Liaison Committee would act against Umno members who supported Anwar, Ramli said the supreme council meeting next week would discuss this.

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