

26/09/1998

Isa: Foreign media trying to paint wrong picture

SEREMBAN, Fri. - Menteri Besar Tan Sri Mohd Isa Abdul Samad today described the foreign media's negative reports following the sacking of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim as a deliberate attempt to paint a wrong picture of the country.

He said their negative attitude was not surprising as they had been reporting negatively about the country for a long time.

"They only see negative things. The good aspect (about the country) are always not considered," he said after chairing the State Islamic Council meeting here.

Anwar, the former deputy prime minister and finance minister, was sacked from the Government on Sept 2 for moral misconduct and was expelled from Umno a day later.

Mohd Isa said one example was the success of the Malaysian Government's currency control measures introduced recently which was not acknowledged by some sections of the foreign media.

He said that Malaysians were accustomed to the negative attitude of the foreign media prompting them to ignore such reports.

"Although a small group of people were influenced by foreign media reports, a vast majority of the rakyat chose to ignore the reports as they know better of the situation in the country," he added.

Mohd Isa said if the foreign media continue to report negatively about the country, they will be guilty of ignoring journalism ethics.

Meanwhile, he said, Australian Prime Minister John Howard had no right to criticise the decision of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to sack Anwar as Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister on Sept 2.

"It is unfair of Howard to regard Dr Mahathir's action as autocratic especially when the situation here and Australia is different," he said, adding that Howard's uncalled for statement was aimed at fishing for votes in view of the country's coming general elections.

In Tumpat, Kelantan Umno deputy liaison chief Datuk Annuar Musa said the sacking of Anwar has not affected Kelantan Umno's stability and unity.

Although two of its members - Tumpat divisional head Datuk Kamaruddin Jaafar and Pasir Puteh divisional head Kamaruddin Mohd Noor - have been detained under ISA, he said their affiliation with Anwar was due to their personal relations with the former.

"The sacking of Anwar did not at all affect Kelantan Umno nor in the divisions led by the two.

"Umno members in Kelantan will continue their responsibility to the party and with their preparations for the next general election," he told reporters after a meeting with Tumpat Umno members at the Balairaya Tanjung Che Mas.

In Slim River, Umno Supreme Council member Datuk Khalid Yunus said the people must have faith in Dr Mahathir and his leadership to help revive the economy and maintain political stability.

Khalid, who is also Deputy Education Minister, was speaking at the launching of the Kampung Balun 78th Jubilee celebration on behalf of Education Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak.

Khalid said the "Anwar issue" was a sad affair but what was important was for the people to rally behind the current leadership and understand that what was done was for the good of the country.

"It is all a matter of conscience. You can see for yourselves who is

right and who is wrong and make the right choices.

"If you don't believe in Dr Mahathir, who else do you believe in?" he said, adding that truth would prevail in time.

Khalid said Umno leaders should keep in mind that they could not afford to act inappropriately as they could face serious repercussions.

He likened Anwar's issue to the Malay idiom "setinggi-tinggi tupai melompat, satu hari jatuh juga" (No matter how high the squirrel jumps, he will one day fall).

Khalid also advised the people to be calm and rational and not be overcome by emotions.

"Have faith in your leader and the leadership and listen to what he says, just as we have done in the past, because this has made us Malaysians to live in peace for the past 42 years," he said.

In Kuala Nerang, Kedah Menteri Besar Tan Sri Sanusi Junid said people who continue supporting Anwar should realise that they are refusing to accept the truth despite numerous explanations regarding events leading to Anwar's fall from grace.

"Some people still refuse to accept the truth although there is so much evidence," he said.

Sanusi said this after laying the foundation stone for the construction of a new building block of Sekolah Menengah Agama Al-Khairiyah, Jalan Pedu, near here.

In Klang, Selangor Menteri Besar Datuk Abu Hassan Omar advised the public take heed of the warning issued by the Inspector-General of police Tan Sri Abdul Rahim Noor yesterday on illegal assembly and demonstration.

He said they must avoid being involved in any illegal assembly as they might get into trouble with the police.

"If they disobey the warning, then don't blame the authorities if they are arrested as the police have the duty to safeguard the country and other peace loving citizens from violence," he told reporters after launching the earthworks for a four-hectare site dedicated to low-cost apartments in Bandar Bukit Tinggi, near here.

He also said that the State Umno Liaison Committee had identified six members from Selangor who were responsible for organising the illegal assembly attended by Anwar in Tanjung Karang last Wednesday.

"We will forward their names to the party's disciplinary committee which will decide on what action to be taken against them," he said.

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