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Anuar Zaini: I won't quit

Azura Abas; V. Shankar

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - Universiti Malaya vice-chancellor Professor Datuk Dr Anuar Zaini Mohd Zain today told Puteri Umno not to point fingers over the fire which destroyed Dewan Tunku Canselor.

He also told the womenfters movement to behave in a more becoming manner.

He indicated he would not resign because he had been given the mandate to take charge of the university "and I am going to do it", he said.

"As far as I am concerned, what has happened has nothing to do with me resigning as we have all the means and co-operation from the authorities to look into the incident.

"Granted a tragedy has happened. When they (Puteri Umno) start accusing others, I think this shows a lack of professionalism," he added.

He said the university was "inculcating good values, ethics, sensible thinking and rational deduction in our students".

Puteri Umno had called for Anuar's resignation. Its pro tem chief Azalina Othman Said submitted a memorandum yesterday because the movement was not satisfied with the explanation Anuar gave to the Press, and felt it had to take a stand on the matter.

Azalina said Anuar should take full responsibility for the incident.

Azalina also said Puteri Umno felt that the vice-chancellor should have been in a position to monitor the situation and thus prevent such an incident.

Anuar refuted the allegations that he was unaware of anti-Government sentiments in the university. "I am aware of it and have been monitoring it closely with the university's security division.

"Our security people are very experienced in this and we have collected all the risalah (leaflets). We also want to catch the people involved red-handed," he told reporters at the two-day Symposium On Reaffirming The Idealism Of Undergraduates In The New Millennium which opened on the campus today.

Leaflets containing anti-Government messages urging undergraduates to boycott the student leadership symposium have been distributed around the campus.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has been invited to speak at the closing ceremony tomorrow.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak were among the speakers today.

The symposium was to have been held at Dewan Tunku Canselor, but yesterdayfters early morning fire forced a change in venue to the smaller-sized Dewan Perdana Siswa.

The fire gutted the building's interior, causing some RM12.4 million in damage.