

22 APR 2001
Zainuddin-Chandra
ZAINUDDIN WELCOMES CHANDRA'S STAND ON DEMOCRACY

KUALA LUMPUR, April 22 (Bernama) -- Information Ministry parliamentary secretary Datuk Zainuddin Maidin today welcomed Parti Keadilan Nasional deputy president Dr Chandra Muzaffar's acceptance of the principle of democracy by consensus as contained in Vision 2020.

He said Dr Chandra's stand showed that he rejected the concept of "ritualistic and hatred" politics allegedly practised by the Barisan Alternatif.

"The statement is most timely as it has consolidated an otherwise uncertain situation that was brought under control by the security forces who succeeded in crippling street politics aimed at bringing down the government by force," Zainuddin said in a statement.

In an interview published in Minggu Malaysia today, Dr Chandra said that the objective of democracy for Malaysians, as contained in Vision 2020, was to create what has been described as democracy based on the principle of consensus.

According to Zainuddin, Dr Chandra's views indicated an indepth understanding of the danger of street politics.

"Anyone who reads the interview in full will clearly understand that Chandra does accept (Prime Minister Datuk Seri) Dr Mahathir Mohamad's Vision 2020 and the leader's achievements so far," he said.

Zainuddin, a former editor-in-chief of Utusan Malaysia, disagreed with Dr Chandra that the daily's editorials had never been critical of Dr Mahathir.

"Chandra will know that he and his friends had, before the political changes took place, written critical articles in the newspaper, regarded as the ruling party's paper," he said.

Zainuddin said Dr Chandra did not know that the pressure faced by editors before Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's dismissal from the government and Umno was from not from Dr Mahathir but from people in Umno who came out with strategies to pressure the media to bring about the immediate fall of the country's leadership.

"From my experience, political interference in government newspapers before the former DPM's dismissal in 1998 was very serious. Newspapers were in fact controlled from the DPM's office and not the Prime Minister's Department," he said.

On the subject of cronism, Zainuddin said Dr Chandra should not be confused about the facts as the truth was that "the bigger cronies are the cronies who left or were removed from Umno and have joined Keadilan".

"These are the people who have millions of ringgit within and outside the country," he said.

He claimed that people in Keadilan were able to organise street demonstrations because the former Umno cronies were willing to finance them.

Zainuddin hoped that Dr Chandra, as an intellectual, would be able to view the present situation from a fairer and more objective perspective.

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