

06/09/1998

`Don't take problems to the people'

Alex Choong

KUALA LUMPUR, Sat. - Umno vice-president and Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today it was irresponsible of former Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim to take his personal problems to the people and hope to solve them in the streets.

He said Anwar should know the country needed political stability at a time when it was facing economic problems.

"Yet he decided to politicise the issue and seek support from the people to solve his personal problems," he added.

Speaking to reporters at Wisma Putra on his return from the Non-Aligned Movement summit in Durban, Abdullah said Anwar should resolve the issue through the legal process if he felt he had been wronged.

"If he says that he has been implicated, I think he should resolve the issue through the legal process. Anwar can employ lawyers, I am sure sure he has many such friends to support him."

Abdullah was asked to comment on the removal of Anwar as Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister and his expulsion from Umno.

Abdullah said Anwar had obviously brought all these troubles upon himself as Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad "is not one who makes such a decision easily".

"I also do not believe that Dr Mahathir wants to play politics with his former deputy," he added.

Abdullah said "when something has happened ... I am sure that there is something to convince Dr Mahathir to take such action".

Despite the economic difficulties faced by the country, he said that the matter could not be compromised.

Asked whether the sacking would be embarrassing to the country in view of the Commonwealth Games which was starting next week, Abdullah said:

"Dismissing ministers and deputy ministers from the Cabinet is not something strange. This has happened many times and in many other countries including Malaysia."

On whether Anwar's decision to take the issue to the people would project a negative image of the country, Abdullah said:

"Obviously, when he (Anwar) takes the issue to the people, hoping to solve his personal problems in the streets, it will create some problems. This will give a wrong impression to the people about the situation in Malaysia.

"If the Prime Minister is not happy with you, you go and you do not need to go to the streets to complain to the people.

"I do not think Anwar should do it. Is he (Anwar) saying that he was there (as Deputy Prime Minister) as a matter of right?" asked Abdullah.

He said Anwar was there because the Prime Minister wanted him there.

"We know the Prime Minister wanted to make him his successor ... so be it and nobody disturbed him," he added.

Abdullah said Anwar was powerful, popular and enjoyed all the perks and privileges because of the protection extended to him by the Prime Minister.

"Now that he is out, he wants to take to the streets and make all sorts of accusations," he added.

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