

18/08/1998

We rely only on ourselves for recovery, says Abdullah

KOTA KINABALU, Mon. - Malaysia does not expect assistance from other countries, including Singapore, to overcome its economic problems, Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said.

He said the Malaysian Government would have to use its own strength and available resources and facilities to put the economy back on track.

"We enjoy political stability and a strong Government that is committed to hasten our economic recovery," Abdullah said at the international airport here before returning to Kuala Lumpur.

He was asked to comment on reports quoting Singapore Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew as saying the republic's ties with Malaysia and Indonesia had soured because its neighbours expected it to offer too much help to overcome their economic problems.

The former Singapore Prime Minister was also reported to have said Singapore would help within its capabilities and where it could make a difference.

Abdullah said Malaysia had not sought any assistance from the Singapore Government to overcome its economic problems.

"If Singapore wants to offer help to us then it's up to it to fulfil what it promises," he said, adding that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had repeatedly said that Malaysia did not rely on assistance from other countries.

He said the impasse over clearance procedures for rail passengers going to Singapore was an entirely different issue.

"The CIQ (Customs, Immigration and Quarantine) issue has nothing to do with the question of offering help to us."

Abdullah said Malaysia hoped that Singapore would not ask for something that was beyond Malaysia's capability to deliver.

"We also hope that they (Singapore) will not ask for something that is beyond Malaysia's capability to deliver...like the water issue, we also have to think of our needs," he said.

Asked if Lee's statement would further aggravate the strained ties between Malaysia and Singapore, Abdullah said it was up to the people to make their assumptions.

(END)