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Abdullah calls for an end to rumour mongering

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KEPALA BATAS, Sun. - Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi has called for an end to rumour mongering, including those about Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's health.

The stories, he said, caused public anxiety, particularly the possibility of public disorder circulated through various channels including poison pen letters, the Internet and other means.

"We do not want people to be restless until they cannot carry out their business of making a living," said Abdullah, who described rumour mongering as a "non-beneficial, irresponsible and wasteful activity."

Abdullah was speaking at the launching of the national level Anti-Dadah campaign at Sekolah Menengah Datuk Haji Ahmad Badawi here today.

Also present were Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon, his deputy Datuk Mohd Shariff Omar and National Drug Agency director-general Datuk Mohd Bakri Omar.

Abdullah said he failed to understand why people still spread rumours about Dr Mahathir's health when official statements insisted that the Prime Minister was in good condition.

What's worse, he said, was that the negative stories circulated were designed to humiliate or provoke anger against the Prime Minister and cause public anxiety.

Abdullah gave an assurance that Dr Mahathir was recovering and would be back to resume his duties.

"The people need not worry because the Prime Minister is getting the best possible medical care. He had been advised by doctors to take complete rest for a few more days."

He said it was common for people, like Dr Mahathir, who has had a bypass surgery, to be treated at the National Heart Institute though he was suffering from a lung infection.

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