

05/05/1999

Abdullah: I am in no hurry to be PM

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BANGI, Tues. - Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said he is in no hurry to assume "the higher post", and that he is proud to serve Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

He said he was happy to be contributing towards nation building.

Abdullah said he wanted to be a competent Deputy Prime Minister and Home Minister.

"I like to work hard and there is a lot of work to do."

He said this to reporters who sought his comments on Dr Mahathir's statement on Sunday on the question of succession.

The Prime Minister had told reporters in Alor Star he would evaluate the situation to determine when it would be the best time for him to hand over his post to Abdullah.

Said Abdullah who was made Dr Mahathir's No 2 on Jan 8, : "I am in no hurry to assume the higher post.

"That is up to the Prime Minister."

Abdullah said he was happy to be doing all the work he had been entrusted with as he could contribute towards nation-building and the betterment of the people.

"I have before me heaps of files, which I must go through, read and execute.

"There are still many places that I must visit."

Abdullah also described Dr Mahathir as "a very good and dedicated leader", and someone, who was misrepresented many times by those who did not understand his style.

"But as someone who works closely with him and participates in many meetings involving him, especially in economic recovery efforts, I know how dedicated and committed he is," Abdullah said after addressing the District Officers' Conference at the Hotel Equatorial, Bangi.

Asked whether he felt vindicated by his earlier comments that he saw his job as nothing more than assisting the Prime Minister, Abdullah said he wanted to be a Deputy Prime Minister who discharged his duties in a competent manner.

"Because that's my job. I am also Home Minister, and I hope to be a competent Minister.

"That's my style and I don't have any other vision.

"My vision is Vision 2020 which has been accepted by the people," he said.

Abdullah had in an interview on Feb 2 said he truly understood his new role as Deputy Prime Minister, which was "not more than to assist the Prime Minister and as his deputy".

He made it clear in the interview there was only one general.

Asked whether his experience as an administrator had been helpful, Abdullah said it had to a certain extent.

In this context, he told the district officers the importance of the manual of procedure and maintaining desk files, saying that these were still relevant.

"I am afraid they will forget it," Abdullah said.

He said he would go to the ground to see for himself the implementation of Government projects and identify solutions to problems, and possibly make on-the-spot decisions.

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