

11 JAN 1999

Anwar-Abdullah

ANWAR WELCOMES ABDULLAH'S APPOINTMENT AS DEPUTY PM

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 11 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim today welcomed the appointment of Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi as Deputy Prime Minister.

Anwar, however, said Abdullah's integrity would be questioned if he "always refers to and obeys" Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Anwar said this in a statement read out to reporters by his wife Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Ismail.

Abdullah's appointment, which takes effect today, was announced by Dr Mahathir last Friday. The Prime Minister also handed over the Home Affairs portfolio held by him to Abdullah.

Anwar said the people were waiting to see Abdullah's stand on "wastage and mega projects, corruption and the use of the nation's wealth for the family and cronies".

Anwar described Dr Mahathir's decision to relinquish the Home Affairs portfolio as appropriate, but expressed shock over Tun Daim Zainuddin's appointment as Finance Minister.

Anwar also claimed that the decision by Dr Mahathir to postpone party elections showed that the Prime Minister, who is also Umno president, was not confident of the level of support for Umno at the grassroots.

Anwar, who is currently being tried on four charges of corruption, was dismissed as Deputy Prime Minister and Finance Minister on Sept 2 last year.

--BERNAMA

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