

12/01/1999

DPM: I will strive for people-friendly administration

KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. - Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today that he will strive to ensure a people-friendly administration at the Home Ministry.

Abdullah, who has also been appointed Home Minister, said he would strive to meet the aspiration of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in ensuring a people-friendly administration by giving immediate attention to problems raised by the public.

"He (Dr Mahathir) wants departments under the Home Ministry to adopt a more people-friendly attitude.

"To me, there should be no problem in implementing such an approach," he told reporters after calling on Dr Mahathir at the Prime Minister's Department, here.

At the 30-minute meeting, Dr Mahathir briefed him on his duties following his appointment to the two posts.

Abdullah, who was Foreign Minister prior to his new appointment, said that his duties as Deputy Prime Minister would be further specified by Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Abdul Halim Ali.

At the meeting, Dr Mahathir also informed Abdullah of his membership in the National Economic Action Council which meets every working day except on Wednesdays when the Cabinet holds its weekly meeting.

He was, however, not informed of his post or position in the NEAC except that he was a member of its executive committee which holds regular meetings chaired by the Prime Minister.

"I pledge to focus on efforts to implement whatever decisions made by the Government or the NEAC ... this is vital as decisions made must be implemented fast so that the desired results can be achieved through immediate action," he said.

Abdullah said he could see that Dr Mahathir had placed priority on the Government's measures to revive the economy as the NEAC and matters related to it topped their discussion.

He said he would be operating from the Home Ministry and would move into the office of the Deputy Prime Minister once it had been cleared.

In a tribute to the Foreign Ministry staff, Abdullah said they were responsible for the success of Malaysia in the international fora and for him as the former Foreign Minister.

Speaking during his farewell speech at a special function organised by Foreign Ministry staff, Abdullah said Malaysia's foreign policies had not only been successful, but was also accepted internationally.

"This could not have been possible without the hard work of the officers and staff of Wisma Putra," he said.

Abdullah said the Foreign Ministry had grown from strength to strength and helped put Malaysia in the forefront of international issues.

"So it is not entirely suprising that even people at the grassroots are now talking about international issues such as developments in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Somalia and Palestine.

"The frequent visits overseas by Malaysians to invest and to do business had also made Wisma Putra the focus of attention," he said.

He said Malaysia was now recognised worldwide because of the manner in which it had handled various international issues.

Abdullah said he had served the Foreign Ministry for eight years, the longest he was in any Ministry.

"As such I see my appointment as Deputy Prime Minister as a recognition to the Ministry," he said.

Abdullah also said he had learnt much since he took over as Foreign Minister in 1991.

He also appealed to the staff of Wisma Putra to co-operate fully with the new Foreign Minister Datuk Seri Syed Hamid Albar.

Meanwhile, the Malaysian Muslim Youth Movement (Abim) welcomed Abdullah's statement that he was prepared to listen to all quarters.

"His preparedness to listen to all quarters including non-governmental organisations and opposition parties is most welcomed and hopefully it can be implemented as soon as possible and in an open manner in the interest and unity of the nation," said its president, Ahmad Azam Abdul Rahman, in a statement.

The National Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Malaysia, in congratulating Abdullah as Deputy Prime Minister, said the business community was delighted with the appointment.

"We are confident that Abdullah will be able to assist the Prime Minister in efforts to revive the economy and to free it from the current slowdown," its president Tan Sri Tajuddin Ramli said in a statement.

The NCCIM also congratulated Dr Mahathir on his choice of Abdullah.

(END)