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No 'mute syndrome' in Umno, Govt: Pak Lah

Lokman Mansor

DEPUTY Prime Minister and Umno Vice President Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi says there is no "mute syndrome" in Umno or the Government to prevent leaders from giving their views openly.

"The Prime Minister has never stopped anyone from discussing issues raised at meetings that he chairs, be it Cabinet, Umno or the Barisan Nasional supreme council. I know, because I am there," he said.

Abdullah was speaking to reporters after a meeting with Kyrgyz Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Trade and Industry Esengul Omuralier in Putrajaya yesterday.

He was asked to comment on national laureate Datuk Shahnnon Ahmad's claim that he wrote the controversial novel "Shit" to address the "mute syndrome" within Umno and the Government.

"This means he does not really understand Umno, only based on what he hears. If he knew (the truth) he would not say that. I know there is no such syndrome in Umno," Abdullah said.

On Shahnnon's denial that he offered a public apology to Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad for insulting him in the novel, Abdullah said it is difficult to take Shahnnon seriously when he says one thing one moment, and another the next.

It was earlier reported that Shahnnon, when speaking at a Pas ceramah in Alor Star on Saturday, had admitted that his writing was too harsh and apologised to the Prime Minister if his novel had insulted Dr Mahathir. On Sunday he denied apologising to Dr Mahathir, saying the reporters who covered the ceramah were young and had misunderstood him.

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