

'we won't bow to foreign pressure'²⁷

KAJANG, Tues: The government will not be cowed by criticism from foreign powers and their media over the arrests of opposition politicians. **SUN 19/2/00**

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said these people have their own agenda for doing so.

"But as far as we are concerned, we will continue to do what's necessary to guard our country so that we will remain peaceful.

"We do not care what they have to say about us as our concern is to ensure that the country continues to prosper so that the people can have peace and prosperity," he

said after launching a course for contractors.

Abdullah, who is also Home Minister, was commenting on reports by Australian newspapers - **The Australian** and the **Australian Financial Review** - criticising the arrests of the politicians.

The Australian said the arrests indicated that Malaysia is a backward-looking state and the action will discourage overseas investment.

The **Australian Financial Review**, in its editorial, said having become Asia's elder statesman "and with some considerable achievements behind him, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mo-

hammad appears intent on destroying his record before he leaves the political stage".

Abdullah reiterated that Malaysian laws do not discriminate against anyone.

"Do the opposition politicians in the country enjoy immunity that they cannot be taken to court for breaking the law?"

Abdullah also dismissed the foreign newspapers' prediction that the arrests of the politicians will drive away investors.

Investors, he said, are not concerned about politics of a country unless it leads to rioting and political instability.

On calls by opposition

leaders urging the people to take part in demonstrations when Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's sodomy trial re-opens next week. Abdullah said: "If they demonstrate and break the law, we will take action against them."

He said Anwar is well represented by a group of defence counsel and questioned the motive behind the Opposition's move.

He added: "Are they trying to change the court process to street trial? That is not our way as Malaysians respect the law."

He urged the people not to get involved in activities that can derail the economic recovery.