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Abdullah-Criticisms

CRITICISE THE GOVERNMENT IF IT IS NECESSARY, SAYS DPM

KUANTAN, Nov 2 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today that the people can always criticise the government if their criticisms bring benefit to society.

He said that such criticisms should be expressed appropriately and with etiquette and courtesy instead of in an arrogant manner.

"The Barisan Nasional (BN) government is not a government which cannot take criticisms. We really do want faults to be pointed out so that we will know what is happening at the grassroots," he said at a gathering of fishermen and participants of a settlement programme for the hardcore poor at Teluk Baru, here.

He said that the government appreciated this as it would be made aware of shortcomings and weaknesses which could be rectified.

"Point them out nicely, in accordance with our culture because if criticisms are not made in an appropriate manner, they will not have positive effect. Maybe the target of the criticism will be angry and those making the criticism will also be angry as the problem is not resolved," he said.

In fact, he said, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad himself was prepared to accept reminders and criticisms but in an appropriate manner.

He believed that weaknesses and shortcomings pointed out at gatherings with elected representatives, government officers and residents' representatives or local associations would be of benefit.

Abdullah also called on Pahang state executive councillors to monitor development projects for which allocations had been approved so that their implementation could be expedited.

He said that even though some projects involved the federal government, there was nothing wrong for the state government to also monitor them to ensure that allocations provided were spent in the interest of the people.

The deputy prime minister said that projects should proceed as soon as allocations for them had been approved because the people who expect development would want to see them materialise.

Referring to poverty eradication programmes, Abdullah said that the New Economic Policy (NEP) enforced in 1970 had succeeded in reducing the poverty rate from 43.2 per cent to 10.3 per cent in 1990.

He said that the rate had continued to reduce and the government would proceed with programmes to assist them.

Abdullah criticised fishermen who operate big boats for preferring to engage foreign workers instead of employing the locals.

"I hope this practice will be stopped...the fishermen should provide all the encouragement they can to employ our own children to work in the fishing boats, big or small," he added.

-- BERNAMA

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