

26 JAN 2000

Abdullah-Mahathir

DR MAHATHIR IS WELL, SAYS ABDULLAH

KOTA KINABALU, Jan 26 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who is now on holiday abroad, is fine.

He said the people should not listen to rumours being spread concerning the Prime Minister's health.

"If anything had happened to the Prime Minister, I would be the first to be informed and so far there has not been anything," he said after attending a Sabah Umno Aidilfitri function here today.

Describing rumours spread such as that Dr Mahathir had fallen off a horse as repulsive, Abdullah said those who indulged in it had no love for the country.

He expressed regret at the spreading of the rumours to the extent that it had affected stock market sentiment just when the market was showing encouraging rises of late.

"Some people are being vicious by claiming the Prime Minister had fallen off a horse ... they repeat it often and it has affected stock market sentiment. These people do it on purpose because they do not like us," he said when asked to comment on the rumours.

He said Dr Mahathir was expected to return from his holidays earlier than scheduled, by Feb 1.

Abdullah said he did not make any comment earlier on the rumours as he did not wish to disrupt the Prime Minister's holiday.

Asked if Dr Mahathir was bothered by the rumours, Abdullah said: "I do not know how the Prime Minister reacted to it".

On the Prime Minister's health, Abdullah said: "Right now, he is fine ... the people have nothing to worry about".

Before meeting reporters, Abdullah earlier briefed the gathering on the Prime Minister's health.

"The Prime Minister will be back early and InsyaAllah we will be there to welcome him," he said.

Abdullah also expressed regret at the recent illegal gathering in Kuala Lumpur held by certain people.

"These people are unpatriotic and have no love for the nation ... they would rather see the country in chaos as long as their motive could be achieved," he said.

He called on the people not to be misled by those with ill-intentions.

Earlier, Abdullah urged all groups in Sabah to work hard in carrying out their duties following the Nov 29 general election.

He said although the Barisan Nasional obtained a resounding victory in Sabah, those who won should not gloat over it as a heavy responsibility awaits them.

-- BERNAMA

JS THG