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`Ensure economy remains strong'

Kamarul Yunus

MALAYSIANS must make sure that the country's economy remains strong so that they can continue carrying out their social obligations, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said.

He said the present economic recovery provides jobs and wages for the workers as well as profits for businessmen.

"As such, this will enable Malaysians to concentrate on helping the unfortunate such as those hardcore poor and orphans," he said when presenting donation worths RM80,000 to orphans staying in the federal territory in Kuala Lumpur yesterday.

Abdullah also said Malaysians should be thankful for peace that allows the country's economy to grow prosperous and enables more Malaysians to be generous.

Unlike in other countries like Chechnya and previously, Bosnia Herzegovina, he said the people there were unfortunate because their plight was not heard due to war and disunity among its people.

"If we do not want this to happen in this country, we have to continue to unite and ensure continued growth in our economy.

"In fact, this was one of the reasons why we did not resort to financial assistance from the International Monetary Fund during the economic crisis because every Malaysian played his part in ensuring success through our own methods to resolve the economic problems," he said.

The donation, which was presented by the Kuala Lumpur Welfare Association for Islamic Orphanage, was collected from individuals and corporates.

Speaking to newsmen later, Abdullah advised Umno members to follow strict procedures during the divisional meetings and avoid resorting to personal attacks during campaigns for potential candidates in the coming party general elections from May 11 to 13.

Abdullah, who is also Umno vice-president assuming the post of party deputy president maintained that he will provide support to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad who is party president.

"I am not an alternative leader to replace the Prime Minister now, but a deputy to Dr Mahathir. I am not going to compete or show that I am better than him."

Abdullah also dismissed allegations by opposition parties that Umno has not practised democracy following the no-contest advise by the party's supreme council for the top-two posts.

"We have always practised democracy. In fact, the campaign by some members to nominate candidates for the party elections shows that there is democracy within the party," he said.

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