

29 OCT 2000

Abdullah-Ezam

POLICE TO PROBE EZAM'S INVOLVEMENT IN SMEARING DR MAHATHIR'S NAME

PENANG, Oct 29 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi confirmed today that the police would investigate the initial admission by Keadilan youth chief Mohamad Ezam Mohd Nor of his involvement in smearing Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's name abroad.

The deputy prime minister said Ezam would be questioned by police although he now claimed that he was unaware of the appointment of a lobby firm in Washington to apply economic pressure on Malaysia.

Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri Norian Mai had said that investigations would be carried out if police reports were lodged on Ezam's admission.

Abdullah, who is also Home Minister, said police have received two reports on Ezam's public admission of his involvement in disparaging Dr Mahathir in the United States and Europe.

"We'll leave it to the police to investigate. If there are grounds, he'll be charged," he told reporters after opening the MAA Building at Jalan Argyll here today.

"Ezam can say what he likes to say but investigations will proceed based on what he said in Alor Setar recently.

"Whether he wants to deny (the appointment of a lobby firm in Washington) that's his business," he said.

Abdullah said police would base their investigations on Ezam's recent statement in Alor Setar.

Asked why there was no mention of bonus for government employees in the 2001 Budget, he said bonus cannot be given freely.

He said bonus could only be paid if the country's economic position was sound.

"This is the philosophy for bonus payment," he added.

-- BERNAMA

AHM TS