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`Quit if work, political ideology clashes'

INDIVIDUALS should quit if their work and political ideology raises a conflict of interest and they cannot fulfil the trust of their employees and clients, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said.

"I cannot see how one can continue to execute one's duties professionally if political ideology intrudes in routine work.

"When people have strong political leanings and when there is a clash of interest, I do not see how such individuals and organisations can still work," he told newsmen after launching Prime College's new campus in Subang Jaya yesterday.

Abdullah was asked to comment on the move by the Malacca State Government to withdraw its fixed deposit from a bank which it alleged has employees who supported the opposition, and to terminate the services of professionals like doctors, for the same reason.

He said such an action was not unusual as the management of private firms may also do the same in similar circumstances.

Abdullah said the principle that the trust placed upon them must be fulfilled should be fully adhered to and they should be able to differentiate between their professional duties and their political inclination.

He said it was not the policy of the Barisan Nasional Government to sack employees like the PAS-led Terengganu Government was doing in the state.

Abdullah said people entrusted with the task of educating children should not allow their political beliefs to get in the way of their duties.

"Don't bring along your political ideology to the place where children are supposed to acquire knowledge. Let them graduate first and make their contributions to the country in whatever capacities they can," he said.

Yesterday, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad said the Federal Government might follow the Malacca Government and stop dealing with banks whose workers it could not trust.

Noting that he was aware that some bank employees were strong opposition supporters, Dr Mahathir advised them to be professional in carrying out their duties.

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