

DPM: Change through ballot box is our way

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PUTRAJAYA: The Government is confident Malaysians will not resort to the Philippine and Indonesian style of people's power to throw out their leader.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said the country had a long tradition of democratic practice which was highly valued by its people.

He said the Malaysian way for change was through the ballot box.

"People's power can be shown in many ways. The ballot box is one form of people's power where people cast their votes during elections.

"Our democratic system allows for all kinds of changes to be made in accordance with the rule of law and democratic principles.

"I believe the people of Malaysia know how to ensure the country is safe and peaceful and does not be-

come chaotic," he told reporters after the official declaration of Putrajaya as a Federal Territory.

Abdullah was reacting to the opposition's comments recently that they believed the "winds of Manila and Jakarta" would soon arrive in Kuala Lumpur.

On Jan 20, Philippine President Joseph Estrada was booted out as leader by people's power and Indonesian President Abdurrahman Wahid is currently facing street demonstrations calling for his ouster.

On the criticisms levelled against the country's top leader, Abdullah noted that the Government was legitimately elected and enjoyed more than three-quarters of majority support.

To a question, he said he did not know why some quarters continued unabated attacks against

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's leadership.

"I just hope they can understand all that he is trying to do. For example, the Prime Minister explained clearly in his speech just now why Putrajaya should not be considered a wasteful project.

"The project is a catalyst for the country's development," he added.

Later on, Dr Mahathir also alluded to the comparisons between him and the ousted Philippine leader.

"Somebody thinks I'm a good candidate like Estrada and they are going to throw me out. It seems Estrada has given them hope," he said.

Dr Mahathir also pointed out that foreign comments about the country had never been right.

"We have to be confident in what we do here and not be taken in by what others say," he added.