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Abdullah-Anthrax

DPM ADVISES M'SIANS NOT TO PANIC OVER ANTHRAX ATTACKS

MELAKA, Oct 18 (Bernama) -- Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi today advised Malaysians not to panic over possible anthrax infection following the anthrax attacks in the United States as the Health Ministry is on top of the situation.

"The Health Ministry is monitoring incidents which occur and it will take immediate action on whatever matters pertaining to the disease," he told reporters after opening the Malay World-Islamic World Convention here.

"So I hope notwithstanding the danger that we may face, the important thing is that the government is monitoring the situation. The government is definitely in control and will take swift action in the event of such a disease," he said.

Abdullah, who is Home Minister, also advised the public not to play pranks in the wake of the anthrax attacks.

He said that even though there had been no anthrax cases reported in the country, some irresponsible people were taking advantage of the anthrax scare to play pranks.

"There are always people who are very naughty...some people are very mischievous and some are really cruel, who will do all sorts of things to create alarm. I don't know why they should have such thoughts.

"Please avoid such jokes as we do not want anybody to be sad or panicky, thinking that they have been infected by the virus. This is no laughing matter," he said.

Asked to comment on a call by a government backbencher in parliament yesterday that Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad take stern action by sacking cabinet ministers who fail to carry out their duties efficiently, Abdullah said he felt the Prime Minister had a better understanding of the matter.

"And this power is vested upon the Prime Minister," he said.

Abdullah said that the Prime Minister was definitely keeping track of the performance of members of his administration including ministers, deputy ministers and parliamentary secretaries.

-- BERNAMA

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