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INDONESIA ADMITS ERROR IN ATTENDING KEADILAN BRIEFING

JAKARTA, April 7 (Bernama) -- Indonesia has admitted that its diplomats committed error when attending a closed-door briefing in Kuala Lumpur together with their foreign colleagues held last week by Keadilan president Datin Seri Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail.

Indonesian Foreign Affairs Minister Alwi Shihab said it was a mere case of miscommunication due to failure of cross-checking on the status of the meeting.

"Before attending the meeting, our diplomats received assurances that the meeting had clearance from the Malaysian government," he was quoted as saying by the English language daily "The Jakarta Post".

Alwi also assured Malaysia that there was no political motive at all behind the attendance as the diplomats believed that the meeting was a discussion on the health condition of former Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

He emphasized that Indonesia, Malaysia's closest neighbour, would never jeopardize good relations between the two countries.

"I believe that Malaysia understands that we do not have any intention in meddling in their internal affairs and will always respect Malaysia's sovereignty as our close neighbour," he said.

Malaysia rapped foreign diplomats last week for attending the closed-door meeting with Dr Wan Azizah saying their attendance amounted to interference in Malaysia's domestic affairs.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir also criticised the meeting while Foreign Minister Datuk Syed Hamid Albar said on Wednesday that he would summon all diplomats attending the meeting for explanation.

It was reported that besides the Indonesian diplomats, there were also envoys from Australia, Britain, Canada, France, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, the Netherlands, the United States, Germany and New Zealand in attendance.

Alwi said this should be an important lesson and that Indonesian diplomats in the future should only attend such meetings if there was clearance from the host country.

-- BERNAMA

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