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Abdullah gets pat on the back for performance

SEPANG, Thurs. - Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad has praised Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi for doing a good job administering the country while he was overseas.

The Prime Minister said everything was running smoothly because the systems and policies had been put in place.

"I am very glad. It just goes to show that this country can be managed because the system and policies have been put in place.

"It is not due to any one individual, including myself," he said at a Press conference at the Kuala Lumpur International Airport upon his return from overseas after one month.

He was earlier asked whether he was happy with the running of the country under Abdullah, and whether the good administration could be regarded as an endorsement on the abilities of his deputy.

Dr Mahathir said Abdullah had performed well.

"He has done very well, he conducted Cabinet meetings, those of Umno and everything else ... never consulted me, did not bother me ... very happy, no phone calls."

When a reporter asked on the possibility of a Cabinet reshuffle, Dr Mahathir replied: "Yes, you can apply anytime."

Pressed whether there was any inspiration for a reshuffle as he had more time to think about it while holidaying, Dr Mahathir said in jest: "It was cold. I was so cold that I could not think properly, so there was no inspiration."

In an interview with the Al-Jazeera TV in London before leaving for home this morning, Dr Mahathir also gave an endorsement on Abdullah's taking over as Prime Minister.

He said in Malaysia, the successor to the Prime Minister would be the deputy Prime Minister.

"Now it is Abdullah Badawi. He is my deputy and if I relinquish my post, he will be the person to replace me."

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