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Mahathir-DPM

PM HAPPY WITH DPM'S PERFORMANCE WHILE HE WAS ON LEAVE

SEPANG, Feb 28 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad today expressed happiness with the performance of his deputy Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi while he was on a one-month leave overseas.

"I am very glad. This goes to show that this country can be managed because the system has been put in place. The policy has been put in place. It's not due to any one individual including myself," he said.

He said Abdullah had done very well in his absence, conducting cabinet meetings, meetings of UMNO and everything else.

"(Abdullah ) never consulted me once, did not bother me. I'm very happy, no phone call," he told reporters on arrival at KL International Airport's Bunga Raya Complex this evening.

Asked if he was going to announce a cabinet reshuffle soon, as this had been done before by Dr Mahathir upon returning from a long leave, he said: "Yes, you (the journalist asking the question) can apply anytime".

When asked whether he had been inspired to fill the post of Finance Minister held by him presently when he was at the Antarctica, the Prime Minister said: "The situation there was too cold. I could not think properly in that condition."

Dr Mahathir assumed the post of Finance Minister when Tun Daim Zainuddin stepped down from the post on June 1. Dr Mahathir had announced then that he was holding the post only temporarily until someone else was appointed.

Speaking about the Antarctica, the Prime Minister said Malaysia had carried out research there since 1999 where the New Zealand and Australian facilities were used by Malaysian researchers.

"But I took along scientists during my trip to the Antarctica and they feel that there are other fields that Malaysia should concentrate on although we are a tropical country. We should know about the origins of the Antarctica and the regime that should be followed by the Antarctica," he said.

Dr Mahathir said Malaysia did not want to see anyone exploiting the resources in the Antarctica to the extent of polluting the world.

"We feel that there should not be any attempt at producing oil or any other raw materials in the Antarctica," he said.

He said Malaysia should be involved in research carried out in the Antarctica because it was found that only the developed countries were involved in managing the administration of the Antarctica and the interests of the developing nations were not given due consideration.

-- BERNAMA .

SR AHH AO