

28 JUL 2002

Abdullah-Donations

NO PLANS TO REGULATE GIVING OF DONATIONS, SAYS ABDULLAH

PUTRAJAYA, July 28 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said there is no need for the government to regulate the giving of donations by the public to people who need help, including for medical treatment.

The Deputy Prime Minister said it was up to the individuals concerned to decide who they thought deserved help.

"On this matter of people extending donations, help, there is no need to have a mechanism. Whoever one wants to help is a matter of personal choice. We don't have to regulate," he told reporters after attending the Home Ministry's Family Day at the Putrajaya Wetland Park today.

The issue of giving donations surfaced after some people questioned why the public and corporate bodies were quick to extend aid to a personality who needed money recently to undergo surgery overseas when help was not forthcoming for many other deserving cases.

Abdullah said: "We hope that in cases requiring our care and protection, we try our best to give attention."

Abdullah, who is also Home Minister, said the important thing was for Malaysians to preserve their spirit of willing to help people who are in need.

To a question, he said it was presumptuous to say that people gave donations to serve their own interests.

"There need not be any (vested) interests. We should not question if people want to give. The same too for people wishing to visit the sick ... we should not raise such things," he said.

Asked if a special foundation should be set up so that people who required help need not appeal for public donations, Abdullah said many funds had been set up to help the needy and the government had also extended its help.

"And if we do so, everyone will turn to this fund only. Many quarters want to help. I believe the present method is the best," he said.

Asked on Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's statement on Friday that he (Abdullah) might lead the Barisan Nasional (BN) in the next general election, Abdullah said if that was the case he would have to discharge the responsibility entrusted to him.

"The Prime Minister mentioned that as a possibility. To me, if the time comes for me to lead the BN machinery in the next general election, then surely I will have to discharge that responsibility," he said.

Abdullah said he held firm to the principle of being loyal to the leader, just like soldiers are required to be loyal to the general.

Commenting on Dr Mahathir's concern about the increasingly serious problem of racial polarisation among the younger generation, he said it was partly caused by the extreme views held by certain people who did not want to see unity among the various races.

Although Umno was a Malay party, history had shown that its struggle did not cause the thinking of Malays to become narrow and extreme, he said.

"But other parties especially the opposition have a tendency to seek support by using extreme approaches to stir up anger and feelings of dissatisfaction," he said.

-- BERNAMA

MAM MSL YBY