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Abdullah-Pass

ABDULLAH PASSES FIRST WEEK TEST AS PRIME MINISTER

KUALA LUMPUR, Nov 10 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi has passed the test of public perception one week in office as the country's fifth prime minister.

This is based on positive views as well as reports by the local and foreign media of his leadership since he took over the prime ministership on Oct 31.

"I'm not saying anything. I just feel somewhat satisfied that the actions I have taken look good. Based on newspaper reports, they seem to give the view, they said (that I have) passed the first week test," he said in a programme "Together with the Prime Minister" telecast over TV1 tonight.

The 40-minute programme was jointly hosted by Mohsin Abdullah and Hishamuddin Aun.

Abdullah was asked how he would sum up his first week in office as prime minister.

During the pre-recorded programme, he was also asked on a variety of subjects from politics, leadership, the country's economy to Malaysia's ties with its neighbours.

Abdullah also said he had not yet decided on when he would make a visit to the neighbouring countries because of other priorities.

"Not yet, during Ramadan I'm not going anywhere because there are many things requiring my attention in the country," he said.

He said this included meetings with representatives of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and other organisations to explain things he would like to achieve as Prime Minister.

On the closeness between Malaysia and its neighbours, Abdullah admitted that there were still issues to be worked out with Indonesia, Singapore, Thailand, Brunei and the Philippines.

"The important thing is that I will try my best so that all problems can be resolved. Our principle with our neighbours is that we must be friends, good neighbours and more importantly, better than long-distance friends," he said.

On those who persisted in comparing him to former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, Abdullah said he was not bothered by the comparison as the public was so used to Dr Mahathir that he was still referred to as Prime Minister or PM.

"People have started accepting Dr Mahathir's way as the PM's way. So, if there is a new person like me, what is Pak Lah's way?"

"When I wanted to return to Penang (after being appointed as the Prime Minister), people said, use the "Perdana One" plane, I said it was PM's plane but they said Pak Lah is PM. Sometimes I also make a slip of the tongue," he said.

On his leadership, Abdullah said all communities should give their cooperation in line with the principle of good governance and they did not necessarily depend on him.

"If there are other approaches, OK. We adopt them and pass them on to others. We must continue to borrow. We accept good ideas. It's not a question of pride," he said.

Abdullah also said the people should know that when the country faced a crisis, they should unite and set aside their differences in the interests of the country, race and religion.

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