

28 SEP 2003

Abdullah-Chin Peng

CHIN PENG NOT ALLOWED INTO MALAYSIA FOR NOW- ABDULLAH

PUTRAJAYA, Sept 28 (Bernama) -- The Malaysian Government will not allow the former secretary-general of the outlawed Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) Chin Peng to return to Malaysia for the present, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today.

Permission could not be granted because Chin Peng was still linked to a banned organisation with its history of perpetrating terrorism in this country, he said.

"I have been told by a third party that Chin Peng had expressed a wish to return now. I replied that we should put off a decision for the present," he told reporters after launching the World Heart Day 2003 celebrations here.

Abdullah was asked to comment on the statement by DAP Chairman Lim Kit Siang on Friday that Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad allow Chin Peng to return to Malaysia before the Prime Minister stepped down on Oct 31.

Yesterday Deputy Home Minister Datuk Chor Chee Heung commenting on Lim's statement said the decision to allow or disallow Chin Peng to return was left to Dr Mahathir and Abdullah.

The former communist terrorist is now in exile in Thailand.

Meanwhile on the counterfeiting of Penang State Government Treasury cheques, Abdullah said he did not want to speculate on whether insiders were involved.

Yesterday Penang Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon disclosed that State Treasury cheques involving RM4 million had been counterfeited apparently by a Kuala Lumpur-based syndicate.

He had said close to 500 such counterfeit cheques had been cashed and RM3 million had been banked into several personal and company accounts in Kuala Lumpur.

However stop payment order was issued and RM1 million was saved after the bank alerted the government yesterday over cheques bearing the same serial number.

Checks by the bank and State Treasury officials revealed that the state government cheques had been cloned.

Police had since begun investigations and arrested six suspects in connection with the case.

Earlier speaking at the function, Abdullah said a healthy population would be able to help the government succeed even more in its development programmes.

He said healthy, active and cheerful people would be able to give their best to national development and progress.

Productivity and efficiency would be affected if Malaysians fell sick too often, he added.

He said the government would continue to upgrade health facilities and the level of treatment to ensure the wellbeing of all Malaysians.

-- BERNAMA

RIZ PR AAM