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Opposition-Abdullah

OPPOSITION, NGO WELCOME NEW PRIME MINISTER

PENANG, Nov 1 (Bernama) -- The DAP today welcomed Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi as the country's fifth Prime Minister and also wished his predecessor Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad happy retirement.

Its National Deputy Chairman Karpal Singh in a statement said that Penang in particular was proud to have a "anak Pulau Pinang" at the helm of the country.

He said the new Prime Minister's priority now was to further improve the country's human rights record and he should also strive towards abolishing the Internal Security Act (ISA) and all laws that provided for detention without trial.

"As Prime Minister and Home Minister, Abdullah should seriously consider releasing all political detainees in the country forthwith, which was what Dr Mahathir did on taking over as Prime Minister in 1981," Karpal said.

In KUALA TERENGGANU PAS Vice President Datuk Mustapha Ali expressed the hope that Abdullah would be able to resolve several matters left outstanding during Tun Dr Mahathir's administration.

To Mustapha the matters that remained unresolved included Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim's case, the Public Religious School (SAR) issue and the failure by Bumiputeras to achieve at least 30 per cent equity.

"We also hope Pak Lah will not indulge in over politicking when dealing with non-Barisan Nasional state governments," he said after declaring dividends for shareholders in the Amanah Saham Darul Iman.

Abdullah was sworn-in yesterday as the fifth Prime Minister succeeding Tun Dr Mahathir who stepped down after 22 years in power.

On the question of relations with the Terengganu Government, Mustapha said among the matters that should be studied and improved by Abdullah were the withdrawal of oil royalty to the state by the Federal Government and loans for water management.

"We also want to see how the new PM who is also Terengganu Umno Chief will help the people of Terengganu," he said.

Meanwhile the Federation of Peninsular Malay Students (GPMS) expressed confidence that Abdullah would continue to introduce changes to the national education system.

Its Secretary-General, Syed Anuar Syed Mohamad said as the former GPMS President, Datuk Seri Abdullah should help enhance the country's ability to produce a more knowledgeable society.

"What we also hope is that Islam should be the basis of all policy changes that will be made by him," he said in a statement.

"GPMS will continue to support the new Prime Minister in implementing his education development agenda to create a generation of integrity," he added.

-- BERNAMA

AYB HIS PR AAM