

09 DEC 2003

Abdullah-Policies

PEOPLE WANT A DEPENDABLE GOVERNMENT, SAYS ABDULLAH

PUTRAJAYA, Dec 9 (Bernama) -- Describing himself as the number one servant to the nation, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today that he may institute policy adjustments in the country if the need arises but stressed that it will not be for personal glory.

The prime minister said a government that failed to cater to changing situations, demands and aspirations of the people would only invite trouble for itself.

"If a government cannot respond to this, the government cannot exist; the people will bring down the government," he said in an interview here with members of the Japanese media, ahead of his first-ever trip to Japan since becoming prime minister on Oct 31.

Abdullah will attend the Asean-Japan Commemorative Summit in Tokyo on Thursday. It is also his first trip abroad as Malaysia's new head of government.

Abdullah was responding to a question on whether he would continue with the policies implemented under former prime minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad or introduce his own ideas.

He said: "We have to be dynamic, nothing is cast in stone that cannot be changed. If the situation warrants changes, and if I don't make the changes, then somebody will say 'he must be stupid'.

"But if there is no need to change but I want to change it because I want (to do) it for my name, somebody will say that is stupid too. Why are you doing all this just for your name?"

Abdullah said he would be guided by the strong belief that whatever decision he took was right for the country.

"I am the number one servant to serve this nation and ensure that all things are being implemented well and efficiently so that it will benefit the people and the country," he said.

Asked for the view from the top, Abdullah said that what he saw was "a wider horizon and even far away".

"You see a lot of things that were not seen before. A person in a different position will have to deal with so many issues which previously I did not have to deal with directly because I had a boss who was dealing with it.

"Now, I have no boss to refer to, you know," he said.

On the fight against corruption which has been the hallmark of his young administration, Abdullah said it was an important endeavour for no one would like to deal with a corrupt nation.

"We don't want to have a reputation of being a corrupt country. Some people say, 'Well it is not too bad'. But bad things begin with a small thing, They don't suddenly start big.

"So if you don't want it to develop into something beyond your control, you must stamp it out now. Efforts must be made now and this is what we are doing," he said.

The prime minister said Malaysia felt that its position on the international index (which monitors the level of corruption in countries worldwide) was not good enough and must be improved.

"We have to prove that we are incorruptible. That's the only way we can build our credibility, improve our image and become more attractive for investments and trade," he added.

Abdullah also politely deflected questions on who would become his

deputy.
-- BERNAMA
MAM AHH JK