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SARS OUTBREAK MAIN CHALLENGE DURING ABDULLAH'S ACTING PM TENURE

CYBERJAYA, May 5 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi today counted having to deal with the SARS outbreak as one of the main challenges during his tenure as acting prime minister for the past two months.

The deputy prime minister said that the government was happy that Malaysia was not on the radar screen of the World Health Organisation (WHO) with regard to the outbreak.

"That's certainly a big challenge," he told reporters after presenting Malaysia's Best Employer 2003 Award here today.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad retruned to work today after taking two months leave during which Abdullah was the acting prime minister.

When asked whether he considered the past two months as an on-the-job training to take over the job as prime minister when Dr Mahathir steps down in October, Abdullah said: "To me, at any time...always on training. At any time in any job, you must always learn. I will remember what I've done, if it was good, it would be a good lesson. If it's bad, it's also a lesson."

Abdullah said that he was not looking for compliments in carrying out the duties of acting prime minister as he was merely doing what was asked of him.

-- BERNAMA

MAM AT AHH RM