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Abdullah-Economist

THE ECONOMIST MUST APOLOGISE, SAYS ABDULLAH

PENANG, April 26 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today the Malaysian government holds the London-based Economist magazine fully accountable for its inaccurate and unfair description of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's leadership.

"The right thing for them to do is to apologise," the acting prime minister said in response to questions at a media conference after playing in the Utar fund-raising gold game at Bukit Jambul, here.

Abdullah said it was clear that the buck stopped with the writer of the article, Chris Lockwood, and the publishers of the Economist.

"There is no need to point fingers at anybody else and seek scapegoats. From the magazine's acknowledgements of those who helped them with the story, it is clear that they spoke to a very large number of known opponents of Dr Mahathir and the government.

"These critics, who include opposition party leaders and pro-opposition media people, never have anything good to say about us anyway. Only a few of the people acknowledged by the writer are either neutral or pro-government," he said.

Abdullah said the magazine was clearly off mark and prejudiced because it did not take into view the real reflection of what the people of Malaysia think.

"The vast majority of Malaysians are unhappy and angry over this article and its portrayal of Dr Mahathir. We know better than anyone else Dr Mahathir's contributions and sacrifices for the nation and his people," he said.

To a question on whether the article could influence Malaysians' view of Dr Mahathir, Abdullah was dismissive of the magazine's influence, saying that Malaysians "know of Dr Mahathir's great contributions and how his leadership has brought our country so much progress. I know Dr Mahathir's contributions to Umno and the country and will always support him, no matter what anyone says."

He added that Dr Mahathir's leadership was not only acknowledged domestically and within the region, but also throughout the world.

"Foreign leaders and countries have openly and unabashedly expressed admiration and respect for what Dr Mahathir has done and the whole world knows of Dr Mahathir's successes," Abdullah said.

-- BERNAMA

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