

01 JAN 2004
PM-Leave
ABDULLAH ON FIVE-DAY LEAVE

KUALA LUMPUR, Jan 1 (Bernama) -- Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi is on a five-day leave starting today and will be back to work on Tuesday, Deputy Minister in the Prime Minister's Department Datuk M.

Kayveas said today.

"The prime minister informed me yesterday that he would be on a five-day leave starting today. I was told to announce it to the media,"

Kayveas told a news conference at his New Year open house at the Putra World Trade Centre, here.

Abdullah was to have attended the open house but was represented by Culture, Arts and Tourism Minister Datuk Paduka Abdul Kadir Sheikh Fadzir.

Also present were Women and Family Development Minister Datuk Shahrizat Abdul Jalil and Housing and Local Government Minister Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting, who is also MCA president.

Kayveas, who is the Peoples Progressive Party (PPP) president, said

Abdullah decided to take the leave as he had not had one since taking over the helm of the nation from Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad on Oct 31.

"Ever since taking the position, he has worked everyday, tirelessly. He is now taking a break," the deputy minister said.

Kayveas said Abdullah was not having his leave overseas but would be in Pulau Pangkor with his family.

On a different note, the PPP president said his party now enjoyed a "close relationship" with MCA after some turbulence in the relationship of the two parties a few months ago.

Mid-last year PPP and MCA were at odds with each other after the MCA president and its top leaders did not attend PPP's annual general assembly, which was attended by other Barisan Nasional component party leaders.

"We have no problems now. His (Ong's) presence here (at the open house)

is much appreciated. I thank him for coming...it is a good gesture and he told me that he came all the way from Penang for this function," said

Kayveas, who was Ong's deputy at the Housing and Local Government Ministry

before he moved to the Prime Minister's Department.

-- BERNAMA

SR AZZ JK