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Apologise, The Economist told

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PENANG, Sat. - Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi today said The Economist should apologise to Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad and the people for insulting the Prime Minister and his leadership.

The acting Prime Minister said the magazine had given false information about Dr Mahathir and his leadership.

"I think it is best the magazine apologises," he said after playing in the Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) charity golf tournament at the Bukit Jambul Country Club here.

"The magazine had given wrong information in the article."

Others at the tournament were Chief Minister Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon, Transport Minister Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik and State MCA chairman Wong Kam Hoong.

The tournament raised RM320,000 for the UTAR building fund.

Asked if the article entitled "A Qualified Success" was published on behalf of a third party, Abdullah said, "I do not want to speculate.

"We looked at the article and found that it contained feedback from the Opposition.

"The Economist, should bear full responsibility. The article was written by the magazine's reporter and any material published is its responsibility.

Abdullah said the people's support for Dr Mahathir was unwavering.

"The people are solidly behind Dr Mahathir and fully appreciate his achievements. Not just the (local) people, but also foreigners have acknowledged Dr Mahathir's leadership and contribution to the nation."

On the article in the Pas newsletter Harakah that claimed the Government had worked with the United States to topple the Iraqi Government, Abdullah, who is also Home Minister, said:

"It is baseless. It is as if they do not understand the Government's policies and stance. We observe democracy but they exploit it to spread their brand of politics.

"What is important is whether the people believe in us or them."