

PM: There's a lesson in corruption scandals
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There is a lesson to be learnt in the wake of two high-profile corruption scandals to hit the nation over the past week, said Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi today.

He said the people, including civil servants, want a good and quality administration and a government that is free of corrupt practices.

"As such, we have an obligation to carry out our tasks and responsibility with sincerity and efficiency. This is necessary in order for the country to progress and succeed," he said.

Bernama quoted the premier as saying this during the monthly assembly of the Prime Minister's Department in Putrajaya this morning.

Abdullah was commenting on the allegations of corruption against the nation's topmost corruption fighter, Anti-Corruption Agency (ACA) director-general Zulkipli Mat Noor, as well as his deputy in the Internal Security Ministry, Mohd Johari Baharum.

While Zulkipli was alleged to have amassed properties and wealth beyond his means, Johari was accused of receiving RM5.5 million to free certain criminal suspects held under the Emergency Ordinance (EO).

The cases are currently under investigation and both Zulkipli and Johari have denied the allegations.

No fear if you are clean

Meanwhile, the prime minister vowed that action would be taken against those involved in corruption.

However, he said that those who do not indulge in such practices should have no fear.

Abdullah pointed out that what is important is that investigations on allegations of corruption are carried out in a just manner.

"Of course, no one wants corruption. Action must be taken. Those who are innocent need not worry," he said.

The premier said that generally 85 percent of the reports submitted pertaining to accusations of corrupt practices are unfounded.

"Nonetheless, the action that we take is not based on perception but on information, This is crucial. We are always cautious in such matters," he added.

Abdullah explained that is the reason why any appointment for senior government posts is only made after the officer concerned has been screened by the relevant authorities.

"The officer is only appointed if we find that he has a clean record. That is our practice," he said, adding that the same practice is also adopted in selecting candidates to represent the

Barisan Nasional.

Rosy picture

The prime minister's speech also touched on his visits to Syria and Yemen last week, which has given the impression that the government leaders and businessmen that he met are highly impressed with Malaysia.

He said that he had explained to them that the economic development and racial unity prevailing in the country was achieved through perseverance, including in tackling problems that crop up from time to time.

He said many foreign leaders are keen to learn from Malaysia's experience in drawing up and implementing the country's development agenda.

"They want to send their students and officials, their team of planners to come and study how we plan and execute our plan," he said.

Abdullah said that is why government officers and staff must carry out their responsibilities in the best manner possible to avoid the foreigners from feeling disillusioned by the rosy picture they have been given.

"The story that they hear is great and very good, but when they come and see, it's not as what they have heard. This is certainly shameful," he added.

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