

Ruhanie: Meeting will help clear air

BY JANE RTIKOS

KUALA LUMPUR: Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad should meet to iron out their differences and correct the perception that they are at loggerheads, said former Backbencher's Club chairman Datuk Ruhanie Ahmad.

He said a group or an individual could persuade both of them to meet and discuss their differences over policies, projects and programmes.

But he said the meeting should not touch on their leadership styles.

"This does not mean that Abdullah will be lowering his status or Dr Mahathir enhancing his. But it will help to correct the perception that they are at loggerheads.

"The Prime Minister makes decisions based on his wisdom but people might perceive it as otherwise.

"Such a meeting will be in the nation's interests," he said of Dr Mahathir's criticisms of Abdullah's administration.

Ruhanie said Dr Mahathir should be allowed to express his views on what he perceived as wrong about the current administration.

No doubt he is an ordinary citizen now but he is also the former premier. He is someone with deep, broad and special knowledge of the Government.

"I believe that what he says come from the bottom of his heart and I think people appreciate what he says because of his broad knowledge. He represents the silent majority," he said.

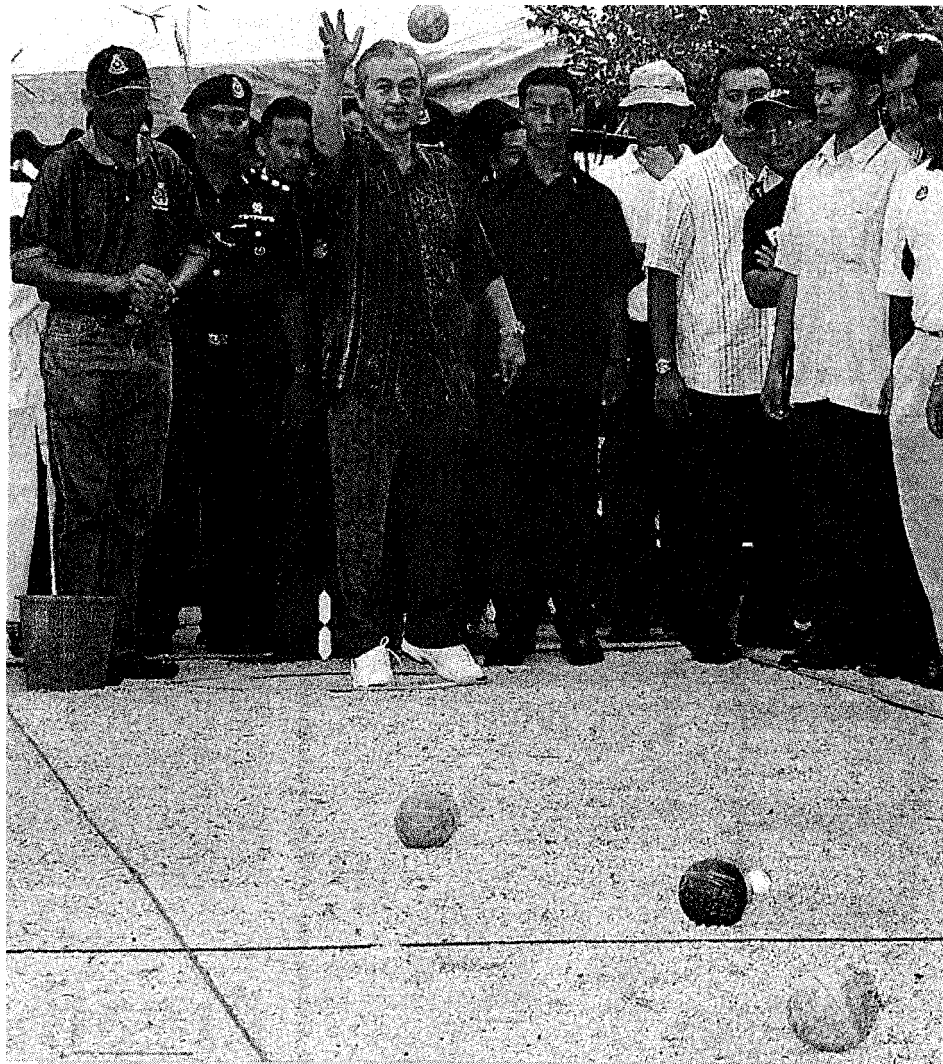
Ruhanie lauded Abdullah's calm reaction to the criticisms, describing the behaviour as "exemplary".

"The Prime Minister was right when he said he has to fulfil the promises he made to the people but it is also a matter of honour for him to keep to his promises to Dr Mahathir when he was handed the leadership.

"People expect a certain degree of adherence to the principle of continuity because they both belong to the same government and party," he said.

Ruhanie said that if the current developments and situation warranted policies to be changed, Dr Mahathir as the originator of the policies, should be referred to.

"For example, in the case of the bridge which was scrapped, I believe in all honesty that it would have been nice to consult him (Dr Mahathir)," he added.



VIP PLAYER: Abdullah trying his hand at the game of petanque during the Police Family Day 2006 at Taman Tasik Titiwangsa Kuala Lumpur yesterday as Deputy Inspector-General of Police Tan Sri AAusa Hassan (left) looks on. — Bernamapic