

# Abdullah: That is not the way

NST- 2/9/2006

NEW YORK: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi expressed shock over the ouster of his Thai counterpart, Thaksin Shinawatra, in a military coup yesterday, saying "that was not the proper way to change a government".

Abdullah said he had not had the chance to meet Thaksin, who was also here to attend the United Nations General Assembly.

He said as a democratic country, any change of government should appropriately be made through an election process.

Thaksin was scheduled to address the General Assembly but reports said he had left New York for London.

He was ousted in a bloodless coup by the Thai military and police forces on Tuesday.

Abdullah said he was made to understand that the parties who seized power in Thailand had promised to return the nation to democracy as soon as possible.

"I hope this would be done quickly," he said.

There was no official travel warnings issued by the Malaysian government on Thailand as yet, although Abdullah said Kuala Lumpur was monitoring the situation closely since Thaksin had earlier declared a state of emergency and fired the Thai army chief.

"Should there be any curfews imposed in Thailand, I think it would be best to avoid travelling there for now. We have to wait and see."

A Thai Rak Thai Party member, speaking to Thai Cabinet members in New York, earlier said the prime minister had not given up power and that he was not seeking asylum. — By Mustapha Kamil