

Idris Jala has done a good job, says Abdullah

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SELINSING (Perak): Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said yesterday calls for Malaysia Airlines chief executive officer Datuk Idris Jala to resign following a series of flight delays and cancellations recently were uncalled for as Idris had done a splendid job.

"Idris has done very well, he is a good manager, I don't think that should be the call made by my friend in the senate," Abdullah told reporters.

Tajulurus Mohd Zain, of the Merbok Umno division, had called for Idris to resign because of the flight problems MAS was facing of late.

"He (Idris Jala) has made MAS turn around," said Abdullah, commending him for returning the company to the black in the first quarter of this year compared with continued losses when Idris took over the helm of the airline one-and-a-half years ago.

Abdullah said "MAS is aware of the problems they are facing and efforts have been made to improve the situation" to ensure flights were on time.

"There is some success and the delay time has been reduced," he said.

Transport Minister Datuk Seri Chan Kong Choy said MAS's on-time perfor-

mance (OTP) was back on track to a satisfactory level when it hit 75% on Monday after visiting a MAS operations centre at KL International Airport from the relatively low OTP averaging 62%.

In the first six months of the year, MAS recorded an OTP of more than 80%.

"The delay time has been reduced and I hope MAS can continue to reduce it," Abdullah said, expressing confidence that MAS and its 19,500 workforce and top management would persevere until the airline overcomes the problem.

"He has so many priorities that have to be addressed and, at the same time, ensure that what he is doing succeeds," he said.

Idris, formerly from Shell, was appointed on Dec 1, 2005 to take over from financially-troubled MAS. He had put in place a turnaround plan which culminated in the airline recording a profit of RM133 million in the first quarter this year.

MAS attributed the flight delays to the abnormal combination of unavailability of aircraft, teething problems associated with a new passenger service system encompassing the ticketing system, the reduction of B737 transit time by five minutes, closure of one runway as well as weather conditions. — Bernama