

NEW STRAITS TIMES

DATE: 8 / 7 / 2008

PM: Some are tarnishing tenets of Rukun Negara

NST - 8/7/2008

■ By Hamidah Atan
news@nst.com.my

PUTRAJAYA: Concerned about the political mudslinging of recent days, the prime minister described slander as an act of treason against the country's peace, stability and prosperity.

Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi yesterday said the people's confidence and faith in the country could be sabotaged by the unsubstantiated attacks on its leaders.

Expressing sadness over last week's events, Abdullah said the situation arose from apathy and disregard for Rukun Negara, which caused dissatisfaction and uneasiness among the people.

"It also makes them worried and frightened," he said, adding that the Rukun Negara's tenets — loyalty to king and country, upholding the Constitution, rule of law and good behaviour and morality — had been tarnished.

At the monthly gathering of civil servants in the Prime Minister's

Department at Dataran Putra, the prime minister said lies and fabrications were accepted as truth.

"Truth and the rule of law no longer seem to matter. That will not make this country more prosperous and successful."

Present were his deputy, Datuk Seri Najib Razak, ministers and Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Sidek Hassan.

"We are developing the country and practising democracy but what is taking place, here and there, as reported by the media, spread through SMS, blogs and the Internet, will not give comfort and inspire confidence in the people.

"If all this is not stopped, we will be a nation that fails to uphold the Constitution, rule of law and good behaviour.

"Efforts to change perceptions through lies, all sorts of stories and slanderous statements are tantamount to treason. It will not bring us benefits nor will it make us successful."

"We must overcome this. Unfor-

tunately, there are many out there who are very interested.

"I am not saying all Malaysians believe in what is being spread but it seems that many are trapped into believing it.

"This situation is not good at all. We must realise this and stop doing bad things.

"We must be frank, sincere and responsible. We in the government must continue to emphasise our commitment and dedication to taking the country's peace and stability to a high level.

"This must also be the priority of all Malaysians. We must stop listening to all this."

Abdullah said the enforcement agencies must be firm and credible in carrying out their duties.

"The people must not fear or worry about their safety and that of their families. They must be convinced that what we are doing is for our own future and to make the country safer and more peaceful."

The police would continue to face challenges arising from the

opposition's demonstrations and rallies, he said.

Abdullah, who is also Barisan Nasional chairman, said the coalition had been given the mandate to govern the country at the 12th general election.

"We will continue to introduce measures to ease the suffering of the people in light of the soaring prices of food and fuel."

In the past few days, the country has been in turmoil over allegations linking Najib to the murder of Altantuya Shaariibuu.

Private investigator P. Balasubramaniam claimed in a statutory declaration disclosed at a press conference by Parti Keadilan Rakyat de facto leader Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim on Thursday that Najib knew Altantuya.

However, Balasubramaniam called the media the next day to say he had retracted the declaration in a second sworn statement.

Balasubramaniam claimed he had made the first declaration under duress.