

Govt respects decision of the courts, says Abdullah

The Star - 3/9/2004 - 2 Perdana

KUALA LUMPUR: The decision to release Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim from prison was made by the courts and the Government will accept it, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said.

"It is the decision of the courts. We will recognise that decision," he said when asked to comment on Anwar's acquittal.

Abdullah said Anwar was a free man now and he could go anywhere he wanted, adding that the government would issue him a passport if he wanted one.

To a question, he denied any knowledge of the Saudi Arabian government providing an aeroplane to bring Anwar out of the country.

"If the Saudi government made such an offer, I should know about it."

He said Parti Keadilan Rakyat would be allowed to celebrate, but when doing so, it must respect the law.

On whether Anwar would be invited to join Umno, Abdullah said it was "hypothetical". However, he pointed to the fact that Anwar had made a statement reaffirming his commitment to an opposition party.

On the good performance of Bursa Malaysia after news of Anwar's release broke, Abdullah seemed to dismiss suggestions that the two incidents were connected.

"I don't know what is the cause of the stock market increase. The economy did better in the second quarter than the first quarter. Companies have been announcing profits," he added.

Shares on Bursa Malaysia rallied yesterday. The Kuala Lumpur Composite Index closed up 13.66 points at 842.04. (For more, see StarBiz.)

On whether the decision indicated that there was a trend for greater judicial independence, Abdullah said the Government had always wanted this. "It has been like this all the time," he added.

In **Putrajaya**, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak advised the people not to speculate on the reasons behind the decision.

"This is just an end of a judicial process. We should not relate it to any present or past government personality," he said after the MSC International Advisory Panel meeting yesterday.