

# Snuff out slander, Dollah urges Barisan Youth

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TUARAN: The Deputy Prime Minister told Barisan Youth last night to check slander.

Likening *fitnah* (lies) to cancer, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said good leaders would be toppled if it was allowed to spread.

"Whatever institutions we have built will disappear and will result in our race and country being destroyed as well," he said when launching the Barisan Youth convention here.

Abdullah said some people were encouraging slander and it had reached a point where some of today's youths were denying that anything good could come from the current Government.

They, instead, readily accept propaganda that linked the Government to all that is bad, he added.

"What we have built is through our efforts and sweat and not by rubbing Alladin's lamp.

But what we have can be destroyed."

He said the attacks need not come from foreign elements but from within the country.

Abdullah said the Government's confidence in its ability was not shaken even though the country's legal system, enforcement, bureaucracy, and mainstream news media were under attack.

Reminding youths not to forget the contributions of past leaders, he said independence would be meaningless if the country had to bow to external forces.

Citing an example, he said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad had successfully steered Malaysia out of the economic crisis.

"We used our own formula. Our independence could have ended if we had surrendered to the IMF regime, meaning we would have surrendered our lives to foreigners," he said.

He urged the Barisan

Youth movement to set up a forum of co-operation with the youth arm of political parties in Asean.

"I believe in this age of information technology and higher educational standards, it would be easier to form a strong Asian bloc of countries," he added.

Telling Barisan Youth to stay focused on development, Abdullah said they should be wary of people who were bent on stirring up petty issues such as a right way to swear or talk about women's beauty.

Such petty issues would only stifle intellectual growth, he said.

He hoped Barisan Youth would continue to prepare themselves to face challenges ahead.

"In the next century, the size and population of a country would not be the measure of its strength but how we take on future challenges," he told the 500 delegates