

06/08/1999

BN to celebrate silver jubilee nationwide

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BARISAN Nasional (BN) will celebrate its silver jubilee this year by highlighting its struggle, achievements, and philosophy in developing the country over the last 25 years.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said celebrations will be held nationwide. It will include a large gathering with by BN leaders.

"It is important that we celebrate our anniversary because BN is a party that has brought major changes to the country, in its struggle and fostering cooperation among the different races," he said.

Abdullah was speaking in Kuala Lumpur yesterday after chairing the first meeting of the organising committee for the celebrations.

He said BN is the only party in the world that proves how cooperation among various races in governing a nation can ensure peace and stability.

"This is what has happened in Malaysia and we are proud of the BN. There is always goodwill, tolerance, and concern towards the problems and sensitivities of the various races. We feel it is important that this idea and philosophy be understood by the people, especially the younger generation," Abdullah said.

He said yesterday's meeting, attended by the heads of BN component parties, discussed the scope of the celebration, its theme, logo, venues and financial costs.

"Several decisions were made and will be presented to the BN president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad before specific details can be announced. He will set the date for the celebration," Abdullah said.

He said seven sub-committees were set up, covering among others, preparations (headed by Umno vice president Datuk Seri Najib Razak), performances (Gerakan president Datuk Seri Dr Lim Keng Yaik), publicity (Umno secretary-general Tan Sri Khalil Yaacob), security and transportation (MCA president Datuk Seri Dr Ling Liong Sik).

Asked if the jubilee celebration is a show of strength by BN ahead of the general elections which must be held before June next year, Abdullah said BN cannot be expected to ignore its 25th anniversary.

"This is not a show of strength. As it happens this is our 25th year. We cannot ignore that. If the celebrations occur near the elections that is a coincidence. We could not do it earlier because we were only 25-years on June 1 1999. Now we are starting to make preparations," he said.

Meanwhile, asked about Opposition claims that the majority of 700,000 new voters under the new electoral roll are against the Government, Abdullah said they cannot make that assumption.

"How do they know? Just because some youth make comments that are against the Government does not mean that they represent all youth. Many of them support the BN, otherwise how could membership of Umno Youth and BN Youth continue to increase?

"You cannot make an assumption that young people are anti-BN. I know for certain that many young leaders are very pro-BN. Maybe they don't make a lot of noise, they don't go to the streets...", he said.

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