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Don't squabble over choice of candidates, urges Pak Lah

UMNO members should not squabble over the choice of candidates for the coming general election but strive towards ensuring a two-third majority victory for Barisan Nasional (BN), Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said.

"Our first agenda is to win the election, not by a small majority but a bigger margin or at least maintain a two-third majority.

"This election is important to us as it may be the last in this century or the first in the next century," he told delegates at yesterday.

Replying to points raised by delegates at the assembly, Abdullah, who is Umno vice-president performing the duties of deputy president, said members should accept and respect any decision on the choice of candidates for the general election, scheduled at anytime from now until July next year.

"We have to prove to others that we do not have any problem in nominating our candidates. Therefore, we have to remain united and strive towards excellence," he said.

Abdullah said he himself as well as other leaders of BN's components will adhere and accept any directive from Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad to ensure victories.

"We have proven this in Sabah (during the state election in March 1999), where BN was not given any chance at the beginning but managed to pull through and win the election with a large majority," he said.

"Umno members remain ready to obey the leadership's instructions and not to oppose ... are still ready to face any challenges and will not accept defeat.

Abdullah, who is also Home Minister thanked and expressed his appreciation to the police and army for helping to ensure peace and security in the country, particularly during the recent street demonstrations in Kuala Lumpur.

He regretted that young people were involved in street demonstrations near Kampung Baru and in the Chow Kit areas, which he explained as venues of the bloody racial riot on May 13 1969.

Using their wisdom and patience, while at the same time firm in discharging their duties and responsibilities, Abdullah said the police were able to stop the demonstrations and riots from spreading beyond Kuala Lumpur without any loss of life.

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