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We will stand by our leaders, says Pak Lah

KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. - Umno members will stand by its elected leaders no matter how much others try to discredit them, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today.

The Umno deputy president said the Opposition had gone all out to discredit Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad in the hope of shaking the confidence Umno members have in him.

"They will never see this happen. We have elected Dr Mahathir as our Prime Minister and party president and will stand solidly behind him all the way," he told reporters after opening the Sixth World Federation of Foochow Associations Convention here.

He said the Opposition should not at any time think that continuous lies and rumours about Dr Mahathir would distance him from Umno and the people.

He said he was aware that some Umno members felt restless over these continuous allegations.

"These members should realise that the Opposition's tactic is simple: attack the head to weaken the body."

Abdullah said internal criticism must be made at the right forum and in the spirit of consensus for the good of the party.

Abdullah said even the Opposition was not without problems.

Citing an example, he said when some of the shortcomings were exposed by the BN State Assemblyman for Ajil, Rosol Wahid, at the Terengganu State Assembly on Tuesday, he was asked to leave the House.

He said this clearly revealed that the Opposition was not prepared to have any of its shortcomings exposed. Instead, it chose to take drastic action against anyone who attempted to do so.

"All kinds of allegations are hurled at us in Parliament and at no time has anyone been told to leave the House for speaking out," he said.

Rosol made "history" on Tuesday when he became the first Yang Berhormat in Terengganu to be asked to leave the State Assembly proceedings for standing by his statement made during a debate on the 2001 Budget.

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