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Abdullah-Consensus

IMPORTANT TO ENSURE FULL SUPPORT FOR BN, SAYS ABDULLAH

KUALA LUMPUR, Feb 11 (Bernama) -- Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today it is important to ensure that whatever action by the Barisan Nasional (BN) receives the full support of all its component parties.

The deputy prime minister said there had been many sensitive issues brought to the BN which needed discussion and consensus before reaching an agreement.

"We don't want to do anything that can cause disunity within the BN. So we try our level best to get everyone to agree in whatever we do," he told reporters after opening the Indian Progressive Front's (IPF) ninth general assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre, here.

Abdullah, who is also the BN deputy chairman, was asked to comment on IPF president Datuk M.G.Pandithan's speech calling on the BN to do away with the consensus system which the latter said was outdated.

Abdullah said the practice of consensus anywhere had its pros and cons.

"The practice of consensus is a well-tested one because it can preserve cooperation among the components and thus no party is belittled...that is basically the consensus system." he said.

Abdullah said the BN understood the support and sacrifices of parties like the IPF which had contributed a lot despite not being within the coalition.

He said what was important was to ensure what was best for the coalition.

He also said that he would convey the message and the mood of the assembly to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

Asked to comment on Malay Action Front (MAF) coordinating chairman Datuk Ibrahim Ali's statement that the MAF would not apologise to Umno for its criticisms and would continue to speak out on issues involving Malay interest, Abdullah said the Umno members could assess the matter for themselves.

"What's important is that there are no splinter groups within Umno," he said.

He said Umno's strength continued to hinge on consensus and whatever problems within the party must be resolved through consensus.

Asked whether Umno would take disciplinary action against members who were involved in the MAF, he said: "Right now, I'm not thinking about disciplinary action against anyone...what's important is for Umno members to assess (their actions) themselves."

-- BERNAMA

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