

12/03/2001

Pas' single-party proposal impractical, says Abdullah

Noor Adzman Baharuddin

PARIT BUNTAR, Sun. - Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi today described as impractical a call for a single political party to represent the Malays in the country.

At present, the Deputy Prime Minister said, "we have Umno in the ruling Government and Pas in the Opposition".

"This is not something that can be considered as pernicious.

"As long as we adhere to healthy democratic practices, it (Umno in the Government and Pas in the Opposition) could be good," he said here today.

Besides, he said, the Malays in the past had always been united under Umno which fought for the religion, race and nation.

Also, taking a leaf from Pas history, he said, the Opposition party had its origins in Umno when a group of people decided to leave and form the party then.

Until that point, Abdullah said, the Malays had always been united under Umno.

"As such, the Malays should have always remained united under Umno.

"But ... what can we do ... they are now facts of history," Abdullah said.

He was here to attend the wedding of former Parit Buntar MP Datuk Abdul Raman Suliman's second daughter, Nora Safinaz, 22, and Azhar Sattar, 25.

Nora Safinaz is an accountant with Petronas while the bridegroom is a property manager with Metrojaya.

Also present were Deputy Home Minister Datuk Zainal Abidin Zin and Deputy Agriculture Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Shariff Omar.

Abdullah was asked to comment on Kelantan Menteri Besar Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat's suggestion that there should only be one party for the Malays and that it was difficult to unite the community as long as there were two parties representing them.

He also said that it was up to Pas to decide on Nik Aziz's proposal.

"Reports claimed that he would discuss the matter with Pas president Datuk Fadzil Noor.

"That is all right and we will see what happens next," he said.

Yesterday, Umno vice-president Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak, when commenting on the matter, had described Nik Aziz's call as inappropriate.

On the proposed Malay unity talks, Abdullah shared the sentiments echoed by Prime Minister and Umno president Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad that Umno was open to any suggestions from Pas as long as the talks could be realised.

"Let's hold the talks. It is already difficult to meet... we have all sorts of problems including several suggestions made by Pas," he said.

In Port Dickson, Nik Aziz said his proposal for the Malays to cluster under one single party was logical in view of the present situation.

His view on the single party, however, was not a condition for the unity talks.

"This is my own personal view which I think is logical in view of the present situation.

"If they (Umno) can accept it, alhamdulillah (thank God)... Such a move provides an impetus if we are really serious about uniting the Malays," he told reporters after a ceramah at Bukit Pelandok here today. The Malays needed only one party to remain united and strong, Nik Aziz added.