

Opposition shows arrogance: DPM

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KUALA LUMPUR: The Opposition parties are being arrogant by not accepting Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad's open invitation for them to join Barisan Nasional (BN).

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said BN's proposal was done in the interest of the country.

"The Opposition is only interested in politics. They do not look at the interest of the nation. Their refusal portrayed their arrogance.

"They did not give a chance at all to

think about the invitation. They should have asked us a little about it for the sake of the nation," he said.

Abdullah was speaking to reporters at Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu's Deepavali open house at Chung Hwa Independent High School here.

He was commenting on yesterday's reports that four opposition parties, namely PAS, DAP, Keadilan and Parti Rakyat Malaysia, had rejected the invitation.

The parties claimed that the invitation was a trick by the prime minister to abolish all opposition parties in the country.

PAS spiritual leader Datuk Nik Abdul Aziz Nik Mat said PAS's chances of rejoining the BN is almost nil as the

party is discouraged by its past experience in the coalition.

Mahathir, who made the open invitation on Saturday, said BN practises an open policy and is willing to share power with the other parties.

He said everyone needs to work with the government in order to face the threats of external enemies.

Abdullah also denied a claim by Nik Aziz that the government is trying to trick PAS or the other opposition parties.

Asked whether the invitation is still open, now that the Opposition has rejected it, he said it is up to Mahathir as the BN chairman to decide.

However, he reiterated that BN has always practised an open policy for all.