

23/06/2002

Proposal for Bumi science community

UMNO deputy president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi proposed the setting up of a working committee to help create a Bumiputera Science and Technology Community, or Masteb.

This more focused group of people, he said, was the country's hope in facing the challenges of a knowledge-based economy.

The creation of Masteb, he added, had been espoused since the time of former Prime Minister Tun Abdul Razak, and was followed up on when Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad was Education Minister.

"Matriculation centres and Mara Science Colleges which were set up under Dr Mahathir became the incubator for Malay scientists and technologist," he said during his winding-up speech.

Abdullah added that since the implementation of the New Economic Policy, many Malays had trained as scientists, although the number could be increased.

Speaking on the Umno leadership, he said the ties among top party officials had been very cordial and warned members not to pit leaders against each other.

"Members should not waste time trying to strain the ties among top party leaders because, in the end, the party stands to lose. Party leaders have close ties to ensure the party runs smoothly."

Abdullah said if Umno remained strong, then it would have the strength to fight the Opposition, especially in Pas-led Kelantan and Terengganu.

He added that it was crucial for members in the two States to remain strong and promised that he and his party colleagues would go to Kelantan and Terengganu to woo support.

"Domestic strength is the most important.

"Outside help is like a vitamin jab. For the jab to be effective, the body must be strong in the first place and free from viruses," said Abdullah, who is also Terengganu liaison committee chairman.

Abdullah also cautioned the people about religious extremism, which saw several youngsters joining Kumpulan Militan Malaysia.

"It is the Government's responsibility to overcome any form of militant activities detrimental to the country. Any threat would be tackled seriously by the Government," said Abdullah, who is also Home Minister.

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