

17/11/2003

Abdullah: BN prepared to face general election any time

Saiful Azhar Abdullah; Rosli Zakaria

KUALA TERENGGANU, Sun. - Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi today said Barisan Nasional is prepared to face the general election which can be called any time.

Declining to reveal when he plans to dissolve Parliament, he said every State was working hard to ensure a big victory, including Terengganu, which is confident of wresting the State from Pas.

"Every State is ready for the election," Abdullah said when asked to comment on a Berita Harian report yesterday that the general election would be held next year.

Asked whether the general election would be held between March and June and not in December as stated by Election Commission Secretary Datuk Ahmad Wan Omar, Abdullah said: "That's their view."

The Prime Minister also echoed Terengganu Barisan Nasional's confidence that the coalition would win with more than a two-thirds majority.

"We are working very hard to achieve that and support for us has grown," he added.

Earlier when speaking to a large crowd at Sekolah Rendah Sultan Sulaiman 1, Abdullah, who is State Umno liaison committee chairman, said the people should not be too engrossed in politics as it would not help in the nation's progress.

"When we pit one person against another, we will not go anywhere, but if we continuously talk about development and progress, the nation will prosper. Politics alone will not lead to progress," he said.

He added that the Government had focused on the nation's development since it gained independence and the people were now reaping the fruits of the success.

"We don't talk about politics too much but the Opposition keeps on saying that Malaysia is not an Islamic nation whereas other nations acknowledge us as one.

"Today, we have also proven that an Islamic nation can prosper. We have also proven that Muslims can live peacefully with the Chinese and Indians. The effort that we have made can only improve further.

"We don't make promises but we work and deliver, and we continue to improve and make plans for the future.

"This had been the efforts of the first Prime Minister to the fourth Prime Minister, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad.

"Now I am the Prime Minister and I have inherited a responsibility. Together with the people we will work together. This is not about position.

"I work with the people and for the people," he said, adding that the position he held was not important but being fair, trustworthy and responsible is.

He said with fairness, even non-Muslims would not be worried.

He later presented vouchers to 18,000 people, including the hard-core poor, single mothers and handicapped, to help them celebrate Hari Raya.

At the Sultan Mahmud Airport earlier, Abdullah told more than 10,000 people that the BN needed no blueprint to attract voters in the general election.

He said the BN was not like Pas which had to produce a document to attract voters.

"We have contributed so much for the development and progress. The BN

doesn't need a blueprint to prove anything for the coming polls. It is up to the people to make their choice," he said.

Abdullah also said that Malay rights enshrined in the Federal Constitution should not be questioned by any party as it was agreed upon by parties representing the various races.

"The Constitution is a guide to stability and peace. Parties such as Pas should not question the Constitution," he said.

Abdullah was welcomed with thundering cheers from the huge crowd, some in tears at the sight of the Prime Minister, most notably Ahmad Umno Supajita Uzir from Kemaman, the man whose unique name earned him the honour of welcoming Pak Lah with an Umno flag.

Banners bearing the words, "Terengganu akan kembali ke tangan BN semula" (Terengganu will return to BN's hands) as well as BN and Umno flags were spotted among the crowd who showed their staunch support by loudly cheering Abdullah's speech.

Abdullah later broke fast at the Sekolah Menengah Kebangsaan Bukit Sawa and performed Maghrib prayers at the school's surau. He later performed the Isyak and Terawih prayers at a surau in Bukit Guntung.

After the Terawih prayers, he chaired the State Umno liaison committee meeting at Bangunan Umno before returning to Kuala Lumpur.