

Abdullah: I suggested that Samy retire, but he refused
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When then prime minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi suggested that S Samy Vellu should retire as MIC president about a year before the 2008 general election, the latter flatly refused.

NONE"Almost a year before the election, I congratulated him for setting up a university and told him he had done well for the Indian community, but perhaps, he may want to retire while the going was good," Abdullah said.

"But Samy was adamant and wanted to stay on."

In the book, 'Awakening: The Abdullah Badawi Years in Malaysia', he also said he was not particularly pleased with Samy's way of handling issues. However, he had little option but to try and engage with the elected MIC president.

"I was not entirely happy with the manner he handled some of these issues but he was the leader chosen by MIC, so I had to deal with him come what may, despite his shortcomings," he said.

"I persuaded him. But there is a limit to what we can do because we are a coalition."

'Never saw Hindraf coming'

Abdullah admitted that he did not see the Hindu Rights Action Force (Hindraf) movement creating such a big impact on the 2008 election.

"We didn't really see it coming. To a large extent, we depended on the Indian leadership in government to provide us that feedback but they kept reassuring us that everything was all right," he said.

umno 57th general assembly day three 151106 hisham and kerisAbdullah further conceded that the keris-waving incident at the Umno general assembly in 2006, as well the temple demolition issue in Shah Alam, had turned non-Malay communities away from BN during the 2008 election.

"Unfortunately, it was the sabre rattling and the Malay political rhetoric which turned the Chinese and Indian communities against us," he said.

He said the Umno assembly was telecast 'live' and that the "racist and inflammatory remarks" had done "grave damage" to the party.

"I had hoped that my party members would temper their strength with humility, but instead, some leader and members became abrasive, arrogant, offensive and un-accommodating," he added.

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