

PM's advice : watch what you say
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Opposition parties must be more responsible when making statements in order not to jeopardise racial harmony, said Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi. MCPX

In an interview with Bernama last night, he said: "They must be careful and not make statements to gain popularity among certain races only. Whatever they say, must be done carefully."

abdullah ahmad badawi election announcement 130208 confidentHe also advised opposition parties in power in some of the states not to allow any community to feel marginalised and to think deeply if they wanted to change policies.

Abdullah was asked what advice he had for opposition parties which now have raised several issues that slighted the feelings of certain communities, like the New Economic Policy (NEP) and the special rights of Malays.

"Think it over again and again. Statements on the NEP must consider what meaning they convey. If you do as you like, it will bring a backlash.

"This is something very important they must understand. Becoming the government is not the same as only being the opposition. Both have different roles, now they will know it is not easy or simple (to be the government)," he said.

Commenting on the efforts by the opposition parties to form coalition governments, which already has started to show signs of cracks, Abdullah said: "This is just three parties (DAP, PKR and PAS)."

"What we (BN) have is 14 parties, I believe the people are watching them very closely now," he added.

Don't be too demoralised

The premier also asked BN component parties to analyse the results of the election and rectify weaknesses, if any.

"Don't be too demoralised until you feel like giving up. They (component parties which fared badly) must take proactive action to rectify any weaknesses and move ahead," he said.

As for BN candidates who won, he said they must serve the people well and pay special attention to the poor.

Abdullah said the main challenge faced by him in his first term as prime minister was understanding all the problems especially those relating to inter-racial relationships, which cropped up now and then.

"I had to ensure racial harmony was always at a good level and there was mutual respect and "muhibbah" (goodwill)," he said.

He said the problem of inflation as a result of rising oil prices was another big challenge which had to be tackled wisely to ensure the national economy grew and remained strong.

"It is our economic strength that will ensure we attract investors and also the success of whatever projects we intend to implement," he said, adding that the opposition had exploited these issues and matters related to crime for political mileage.

"They knew the people were unhappy about these things and it gave them an easy path to garner support. But these are not issues I have forgotten, they will be the top priority in my next administration," he said.

Asked if internal dissatisfaction in Umno had been one of the causes of the BN's poor performance, Abdullah said : " I admit the dropping of some candidates was also a factor that caused the BN's campaign to weaken."

"However, I intend to stick to what I understand, that the people have given a message, that is for me to make the necessary corrections and ensure everything goes smoothly so that Malaysia is a safe and peaceful country for all," he added.

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