

Umno's mistake : selecting wrong candidates
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Umno made the mistake in selecting wrong candidates for the general election and that had caused the humiliating defeat for the party. MCPX

This hard-hitting verdict was delivered by Umno divisional leaders in Kedah to party deputy president Najib Abdul Razak in a meeting today.

They claimed that these candidates were selected by the party without the consent of Umno divisions. Party president Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and respective state Umno leaders were in charge of selection the candidates.

umno 2007 najib and umno 061107The meeting, conducted by the party's management committee headed by Najib, is part of a post-mortem exercise undertaken by the party to find out why it lost badly in the March 8 general election.

Talking to reporters after the meeting, Najib said that feedback received by the committee at the meeting showed that many of the leaders and committee members were disappointed because they were not consulted on the selection of candidates.

"We will inform the supreme council about this so that the problem will not recur in the future," he told reporters after the meeting in Sungai Petani today.

Najib also said that the selection of candidates should have been discussed thoroughly with divisional committees.

Party president Abdullah last week blamed saboteurs for the party's failure in the election. He said that acts of sabotage - likely from members who were not selected to contest in the election - caused the party to lose 14 parliamentary seats and 22 state seats.

He said that if these seats - previously marked as safe seats - had been won, BN would have retained its two-thirds majority which it lost out by eight seats this time around.

He also said that the 22 state seats would have allowed the Umno-led BN to retain Kedah and Perak. BN lost the two states as well as Selangor and Penang to the opposition while failed to wrest Kelantan from PAS.

Meeting with Mahathir

Meanwhile, in Putrajaya, Abdullah said that the party has decided that it would not be doing away with its quota system for party polls.

umno party post polls quotaUnder the system - put in place in the interest of top party office bearers - a challenger for the top post would have to obtain a certain number of nominations before he could contest.

For the president's post, the required number of nomination is 58 while for the deputy's post, a challenger would need 38 nominations.

Abdullah, also the prime minister, added that he hoped that party delegates would not be involved in money politics in the coming party polls to be held in December.

He was also asked to comment on the calls made by several Umno leaders that he holds a peace meeting with his predecessor Dr Mahathir Mohamad who has now turned to be his fiercest critic.

To this Abdullah said: "We wait and see the reasons (for the meeting)".

Mahathir had laid the blame for BN and Umno's heavy defeat in the elections on Abdullah, asking the his chosen-successor to step down to save the party and the nation.

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