

Calls for PM to resign will be handled internally
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Umno will deal internally the calls made by several Kedah Umno leaders for party president and Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi to step down, said Najib Abdul Razak today.
MCPX

najib abduallah umno 100408 "It is an internal issue. We will address the matter internally," said the party deputy president and deputy prime minister.

Najib was commenting on reports yesterday that several Kedah delegates had blamed Abdullah for the Barisan Nasional's poor showing in the March 8 polls during a meeting with the party's management committee.

These delegates want Najib, who is also the management committee head, to take over the top post to save the party.

He declined to comment further on what transpired at the meeting yesterday. He also told reporters not to listen to rumours.

Yesterday Malaysiakini reported that the 15 Umno divisions in Kedah - which is now under opposition control - gave a harsh verdict on Abdullah, forcing Najib to call for calm.

Umno has been doing its soul-searching following its terrible defeat in the elections. The party's candidates lost several safe seats - 36 of which Abdullah blamed on internal saboteurs.

Several factions within Umno, including former president Dr Mahathir Mohamad, had blamed Abdullah's weak leadership for the defeat. Mahathir has been calling for Abdullah to step down to take responsibility for the poor electoral show.

The Kedah delegate had told Najib yesterday that one of the reasons for the bad election run was due to mistakes made by the party in selecting candidates. They said that division leaders were not consulted in the selection process.

Party candidates were decided by Abdullah after consultation with respective state leaders.

Personal political agenda

Following this, today the influential Seremban Umno division chief Ishak Ismail added pressure on the party leadership by claiming that several state Umno chairpersons failed to listen to division chiefs on the selection of candidates.

He said certain chairpersons or menteris besar felt that they were "too big" to listen to the views of the division and branch leaders who knew the situation on the ground.

"The situation got worse when party president Abdullah entrusted them with the responsibility of selecting the candidates.

"They misused this trust by sidelining people whom they disliked not for the sake of Umno

but for the sake of their personal political agenda," he said in his letter to the prime minister which he released to the media today.

Ishak, a three-term state assemblyman for Lenggeng, was not chosen to contest the recent election.

Copies of the letter were sent to the deputy president Mohd Najib Razak, vice-presidents Mohd Ali Rustam and Muhyiddin Yassin; all supreme council members and Negri Sembilan Umno division chiefs.

Abdullah is in Johor today and will be meeting the state Umno leaders, who is expected to tell him their disappointment with his leadership.

Several sources previously told Malaysiakini that the Johor leaders would be asking Abdullah to stipulate his retirement plan and indicate when he would allow Najib to take over.

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