

**NST tells Umno to get on with the job**  
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The ruling party should stop "bickering and pointing fingers" and get on with the job of running the country, a pro-government daily said today.

nst headline to govt get on the job 160408In a rare front-page editorial, the New Straits Times newspaper, seen by many as the government's standard bearer, criticised Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's Umno for its behaviour after poll losses.

The Umno-led coalition lost its two-thirds majority in parliament and control of five states in March 8 general elections, in the worst performance of its half-century rule over Malaysia.

The drubbing led former premier Dr Mahathir Mohamad and critics within the party to call for Abdullah's ouster amid anger over the poor showing.

There have also been calls by numerous party leaders throughout the country for an urgent change in leadership.

But the paper, in an open support for Abdullah, urged him on its front page to "get on with the job".

**Umno's boorish, loutish behaviour**

abdullah ahmad badawi pc 190308 02"(Umno party members have been) bickering, pointing fingers, baying for vengeance and doing everything imaginable except rolling up... sleeves and getting down to the work of governing. Enough is enough," the paper said.

"The truth is that the people have long been disgusted with the kind of boorish, loutish behaviour that Umno leaders had exemplified because of their grip on power since independence in 1957," it added.

The newspaper argued that Abdullah should not be the only person held responsible the party's worst electoral setback in last month's general elections.

"Abdullah is not solely to be blamed and everything will not suddenly be all well again if he goes. Umno, from the roots to the high branches, all have to share the blame for their silence, their greed, arrogance and shenanigans that have turned off voters."

NST has singled out two top Umno leaders for criticism - Umno Youth chief Hishammuddin Onn and former Selangor menteri besar Dr Mohd Khir Toyo.

hishammuddin hussein with keris 050805"Brandishing the keris was hurtful to the non-Malays but the party leadership did nothing to take the Umno Youth chief to task for the menacing and insulting gesture.

"Which was why he (Hishammuddin) was emboldened to repeat it and provide extra impetus for the Chinese and Indians to abandon BN at the polls."

Khir Toyo was lambasted for the "desecration of the (Hindu) temple" under his watch as

mentri besar as well as awarding a broom to a top government servant, a gesture which has enraged the civil service.

A similar editorial also appeared in NST's sister publication, the Malay-language Berita Harian.

Meanwhile, Deputy Premier Najib Razak yesterday left it up to Abdullah to decide when he wanted to hand over power.

"Leave it to the prime minister to determine the appropriate time frame," he told the paper.

"I am confident of his wisdom in deciding what is appropriate for the party and nation," Najib said, commenting on Abdullah's decision to contest party polls at the end of the year and to hold handover talks with Najib after the elections.

Traditionally, the president of the Umno becomes the country's prime minister.

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