

Selangor Umno, too, wants Abdullah to go
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Chan Kok Leong & Azreen Madzlan

As Umno divisions in Selangor continue to pile on the pressure on their president Abdullah Ahmad Badawi to step down at a meeting in Subang Jaya, the president-in-waiting plays his part as the perfect deputy. MCPX

While the meeting was a continuance of a series of roadshows designed to find out the reasons for Barisan Nasional's and Umno's unprecedented setback at the March 8 elections, it looked more like the previous ones in Kedah, Penang and Perak.

umno selangor najib muhyiddin event anti pak lah banners 160408 08 Again there were banners either calling for Abdullah to quicken his succession plan or back his deputy as the new chief.

In the fray, party vice-president Muhyiddin Yassin was named as the preferred choice as deputy leader should Najib were to take over.

One of the attendees later said that most of the questions inside the closed-door meeting today centred on Abdullah's succession plan and what Najib planned to do about it.

Still, the deputy prime minister kept to his usual position "it is up to the party president to decide on this".

During the press conference later, Najib said: "The meeting was conducted amicably and the members remain committed to Umno's struggle".

umno selangor najib muhyiddin event anti pak lah banners 160408 05 Among the matters discussed during the meeting were the way election candidates were chosen, on how Umno should deal with the other component parties within BN and how to attract better support from the Chinese and Indian voters.

"The members want the selection of candidates to be picked based on more accurate assessment; those who had higher chances of winning and those who commanded better support from the grassroots," said Najib.

Also discussed, he said, was the subject of transfer of power.

"But I told them (members) that it will be decided by the party president at an appropriate time and in an appropriate manner."

No time frame discussed

On the question of whether Abdullah had discussed the time-frame with his deputy, Najib said: "No time-frame has been discussed yet".

umno selangor najib muhyiddin event anti pak lah banners 160408 06 To questions on pressure from grassroots on the succession plan and of Abdullah's intention to stay as party president, Najib would only say: "It's okay. We understand and when the time comes we

will give the guidelines".

"It's not for me (to decide). I cannot demand. It has to come from the president. And it's only proper when it comes from the president of the party."

On the subject of improving BN's image among the non-Malay voters, he said that this will be discussed on a monthly basis on with the other component parties.

No MPs cross over

Najib also spoke on the claims by Pakatan Rakyat that it has attracted many BN parliamentarians to cross over to form the next federal government.

umno selangor najib muhyiddin event anti pak lah banners 160408 01"At the moment, there is no evidence that anyone wants to cross over. We are watching it very closely but so far there is no indication that anyone is crossing over".

Najib also dismissed PKR de facto leader Anwar Ibrahim's claims that the opposition was ready to form the next federal government.

"That's politics. You can't blame him for that."

Besides Najib, the other Umno bigwigs at today's gathering were vice-president Muhyiddin Yassin, Umno Youth chief Hishammuddin Hussein, Wanita chief Rafidah Aziz, Puteri head Noraini Ahmad, Information head Muhammad Muhd Taib and party secretary-general Tengku Adnan.

Wanita fully behind Abdullah

Meanwhile after the meeting, Wanita chief Rafidah Aziz reiterated her movement's stand that this was not the right time for in-fighting and called on everyone to stop the blame game.

rafidah aziz wanita umno pc 210308 01"Stop it! Stop it! Everyone's wrong. The share of responsibility may differ from person to person but everyone made a mistake in the last elections," said Rafidah.

On calls for a time limit for the president to announce his succession plan, the former trade minister said: "It's up to the PM and the DPM. We (the Wanita arm) are not setting any time limits. It's up to the two of them. They are wise people and they will discuss together."

"It has to be done properly so that the party and the country are not affected. We are talking about the prime minister. Don't forget, we are not talking about the Umno president only.

"In our history, never has a prime minister left or was pulled down from the job and I don't think we should start this tradition now," said Rafidah.

She also said that Abdullah should decide on his own when he should quit.

"Our stand is to support the leader, otherwise there is no party discipline. And the leader

has made some commitments and so he will do it, I'm sure."

Abdullah has come under severe pressure with many blaming him for the party's and BN's worst ever performance in the March 8 general election. Abdullah has said that he took responsibility for the poor result and asked for more time for him to fully implement his policies before he hands over power to Najib.

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