

PM: Stop bickering on leadership issue
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Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi today urged all Umno members to stop bickering on the party leadership issue and focus on people's problems instead.
MCPX

umno mt meeting 280408 04Abdullah said the people will question back if party leaders do not pay attention to the people's grouses, especially on the current food crisis and price hike issues.

"People will say, 'you (Umno leaders) are only busy with party issues and no longer concerned with our issues. You are the government because we have given you mandate', " said Abdullah at a press conference after chairing the Umno supreme council meeting this evening.

Also present at the press conference were Deputy Prime Minister Najib Abdul Razak and Umno supreme council members.

However Abdullah, also the party president, said that although the government has announced a series of reforms, the public was still interested to know about the issues pertaining to the party leadership.

"It looks like people are more concerned about the party's leadership issue. Of course people want to know. So we will focus less on this."
umno mt meeting 280408 01In weeks after the March 8 general election, many Umno divisional and state level leaders have called for Abdullah to immediately announce his succession plan in handing over the leadership to Najib.

Many Umno members and leaders have blamed Abdullah for the party's poor performance in the general election.

Abdullah has said that he would not be quitting and that he had the mandate of the people to continue being the leader. He has not said anything about a succession plan so far.

Former party vice-president Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah has indicated his willingness to contest for the top post in the party annual general assembly in December.

Let the delegates decide

When asked for his comment on several Umno divisions which had called for calling for party leaders to step down, Abdullah said that there was no need for him or Najib to advise these members on the issue.

umno mt meeting 280408 02"There's no need (for that). We know every one of Umno members, their abilities and disabilities. When the time come, we will decide (on party leadership)," he said.

"We'll settle the party issue later. When the time comes, all Umno members will take part in

the party election. What's important now is for the party to give its full support to the government's decision regarding the people's problem," he said.

He also said that since the issue of party leadership was mainly focussed on him, it was thus his responsibility to explain to the public.

"I'm saying it for everybody. If I don't say it, who is going to say?" he said.

'Hishammuddin is brave'

Abdullah also was asked about Umno Youth chief Hishammuddin Hussein's apology over the keris issues. On this, the premier saluted Hishammuddin, stating that the youth chief was sincere and brave.

"It's a brave decision. There will be some Malays who will not be satisfied over his decision (to apologise) but at least he managed to explain to the non-Malays the meaning of the keris in the Malay culture." he said

hishamuddin keris mca assembly 260806Last week Hishammuddin apologised for raising the keris in the last three Umno annual meetings. Many have said that this was a cause for the non-Malays to ditch the BN in the general election.

Meanwhile, when met after the press conference, Hishammuddin said his action proved that whatever he had said before was not rhetoric.

"I'm willing to sacrifice my political career because of the party. It's not only from my words, but also from my action. I hope people can accept this (apology)" he said.

He added there was no pressure from Abdullah and Najib asking him to apologise but he did it merely for the sake of the party.