

Malays at 'defining moment' of history
Malaysiakini.com
Jun 15, 2008

Embattled premier Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today he would not step down before December, but did not commit on whether he will contest the next general elections.
MCPX

Abdullah, who is facing calls for his resignation after a drubbing at the polls earlier this year, said last week he had agreed on a plan to hand over power to Deputy Prime Minister Najib Razak.

abdullah ahmad badawi pc 190308 02However, he said today he would go ahead and contest December internal leadership polls for his ruling Umno.

"It will not be before December certainly," Abdullah said of his departure plans.

"I will be contesting for the presidency," he told reporters, referring to the Umno leadership.

"I am not retiring before December," he added, but refused to say whether he would contest the next general elections which must be held within five years.

"That I will have to agree with my deputy," he said. "We have not decided precisely on the date (of handing over power)."

PM expresses regret over his failures

Najib is Abdullah's heir apparent but has made no public challenge, despite the crisis in Umno since March general elections which produced the worst results in the party's half-century history.

The March 8 polls saw the Umno-led coalition lose a third of parliamentary seats and five states to a resurgent opposition, which now has ambitions of seizing power with the help of defecting government lawmakers.

Abdullah expressed regret over his failure to implement promised reforms, which were a major factor in the defeat at the polls.

"Well if you look at it in light of the election, of course I wish I could have done that earlier," he said.

"If you cannot fulfil your promises then you will suffer at the next election. And I did suffer."

ISA's central principles to stay

But he said he would stay in power in order to push through those reforms, including an anti-corruption drive and a shake-up of the judiciary and the police force.

However, Abdullah was lukewarm on a review of controversial Internal Security Act - which provides for detention without trial - proposed by his minister in charge of legal affairs, Zaid

Ibrahim.

Zaid indicated the ISA, which has been used against suspected terrorists as well as the government's political opponents, could be watered down.

But Abdullah said the central principle of preventative detention should remain.

"Of course, he was airing his views. You know Zaid, he has this reform attitude," the premier said. "The issue of the preventative detention, I think that we have to retain."

Copyright © 1999-2007 Mkini Dotcom Sdn. Bhd.
Source : <http://www.malaysiakini.com/news/84507>