

**PM dismisses 'abuse of power' charge**  
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**Syed Jaymal Zahiid**

Abdullah Ahmad Badawi today shrugged off the accusation that he and his deputy Najib Abdul Razak had abused their power to hold onto the top two posts in the coming Umno polls.  
MCPX

Responding to former Umno Youth exco Mazlan Harun's accusation that the prime minister and Najib had used government machineries as a campaigning platform, Abdullah said what he did was "normal and nothing to fuss about".

abdullah ahmad badawi maha agriculture exposition 120808 01 "What we did had the approval of the party's supreme council. It's not like me and Najib made a secret pact and conspired to politically bribe party members," he told a press conference in Serdang.

The Umno president was there to launch the 2008 Malaysian Agriculture, Horticulture and Agrotourism expo.

On Aug 5, Mazlan lodged a complaint with the Anti-Corruption Agency (ACA) against Abdullah and Najib claiming that both had used government machineries to garner support among Umno members in a bid to sustain their positions in the coming party elections.

The complaint was based on an open letter written by Umno Petaling Jaya Selatan division chief Zahar Hashim and addressed to the party's secretary-general, demanding that both Abdullah and Najib be disciplined for allegedly abusing their power.

In a blog that published the letter, the Umno president and his deputy were accused of using a government agency under the Information Ministry called the Special Affairs Department (Jasa) as their campaigning platform.

A few days later, the ACA subsequently announced that they would call in both the prime minister and the deputy prime minister for questioning.

Quizzed on this, Abdullah offered a vague response. He said: "Once we have decided on the matter, then we would let ACA investigate."

### **Money politics**

muhyiddin yasin muhyiddin yassin Meanwhile, the prime minister also responded to the statement made by Umno vice-president Muhyiddin Yassin that vote-buying in the ruling party is rampant.

Muhyiddin had said that while vote-buying in the past occurred in ballots for top Umno posts, it had now spread to the branch level.

Abdullah also revealed that he had received reports regarding this.

"I have heard about this and what I can do is tell those involved to stop. It is not good for the party and for them as well as they are only lying to themselves," he said.

He added that leaders must be elected based on merits, his or her abilities to serve and lead and not depend on money to garner support.

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