

Pak Lah vows to foil Sept 16 plan
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Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi declared that he would not sit back and watch the Barisan Nasional (BN) lose its grip on the reins of leadership.
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budget 2009 290808 04The message was intended for the man seated directly opposite him in the Dewan Rakyat, newly minted opposition leader Anwar Ibrahim who returned to Parliament yesterday after a 10-year absence.

Abdullah, who is under mounting pressure since BN suffered a major setback in the March 8 polls, vowed to stop the opposition's plan to seize control of the federal government by enticing crossovers from the ruling coalition.

BN MPs thumbed their tables vigorously in approval when the premier issued his strongest response to date on Anwar's repeated claim that his opposition alliance Pakatan Rakyat would take over on Sept 16.

"Efforts by certain parties to destabilise the country by attempting to seize power through illegitimate means, and without the mandate of the people, must be rejected," said Abdullah towards the end of his Budget 2009 speech.

"We cannot allow uncertainties to continue as this will adversely affect foreign investment, economic sentiment and the capital markets.

"I will not allow these disturbances to continue," he stressed. "I will not permit the mandate given by the people to be seized from BN which won the last election with a majority of the seats based on democratic principles."

anwar ibrahim opposition leader parliament 04Anwar was sworn in as MP yesterday after winning Tuesday's Permatang Pauh by-election with a thumping majority of more than 15,000 votes to defeat his nearest rival, BN candidate Arif Shah Omar Shah.

The former deputy premier, who was sacked from the government in 1998, took up the position of opposition leader, previously held by his wife Dr Wan Azizah Wan Ismail.

Since the March 8 polls, which saw BN being denied a two-third majority for the first time, in history, the opposition leader has set his eyes on the premiership.

On numerous occasions, Anwar has claimed that he will get the required 30 MPs from the ruling coalition to jump ship to give the Pakatan Rakyat comprising PKR, PAS and DAP, a two-seat advantage and the right to form government.

Populist claims

Earlier, Abdullah said that Budget 2009 was proof that his government was responsive to the concerns of the people and had taken measures to lighten their burden, especially those from the lower income group.

"The opposition on the other hand, continues to make populist claims, which, if implemented, would undermine the government's financial position and bequeath a bankrupt nation to the next generation," he said.

The premier also made another reference to Anwar and his cohorts when he said the nation's well-being and economic progress cannot be guaranteed with mere political rhetoric.

"Instead, the political culture of extremism will destroy the very fabric of the nation's coherence and prosperity," he added.

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