

DATE: 28/03/2008

Abdullah: Umno polls to follow normal procedures

NST- 28/3/2008

■ By Arman Ahmad,
Jennifer Gomez and
B. Suresh Ram
news@nst.com.my

KUALA LUMPUR: Umno will hold its general assembly and main party elections in December, Prime Minister and Umno president Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said yesterday.

The polls will kick off at branch level between July 17 and Aug 24, followed by divisional elections between Oct 9 and Nov 9.

Speaking after chairing a four-hour Umno supreme council meeting here yesterday, Abdullah said this would culminate with elections for the central office bearers during the general assembly from Dec 16 to 20.

Several Umno divisions had earlier proposed that the elections be postponed to June next year but some leaders were against the proposal.

The party's management committee, which met on Wednesday, also felt that the elections should be held this year.

"The elections will follow the normal party procedures. There will be

no special provisions," Abdullah said.

Asked whether the quota rule for nomination of candidates would be suspended, he repeated that normal party procedures would apply.

On whether all party positions would be contested, he said it would only be known when the nominations were made.

"We'll have to wait until such time when we have the candidates.

"We do not know yet ... you will have to wait."

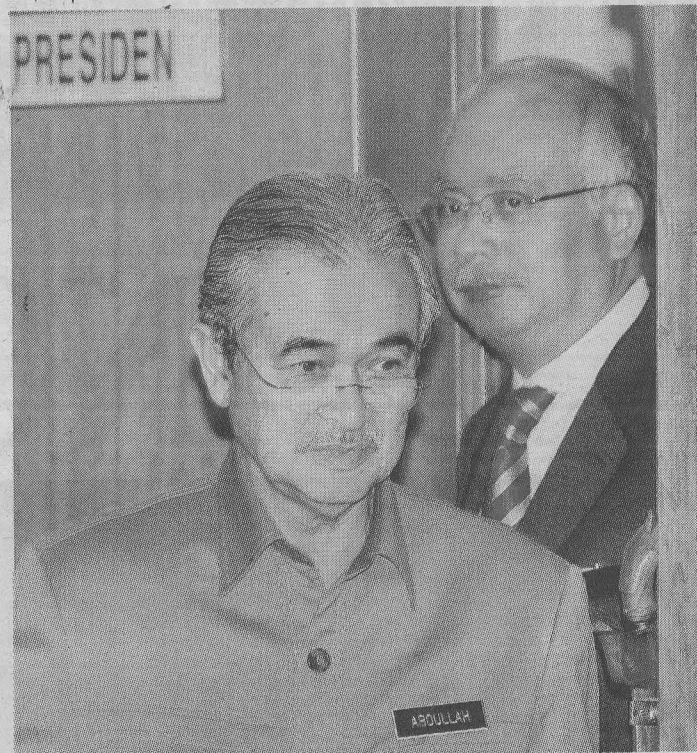
Abdullah also said he was willing to face any challenge to his position as party president.

"I will face the challenge. I will not run away."

On whether the supreme council made any decision on calls for an extraordinary general meeting, he said this proposal did not come from the party.

Abdullah also confirmed that Kalabakan MP Datuk Ghapur Salleh had written to him about not accepting the post of deputy natural resources and environment minister.

"He is busy with other things," he said when asked why Ghapur resigned.



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi and his deputy, Datuk Seri Najib Razak, at the Umno supreme council meeting yesterday.