

DATE: 30/03/2008

'BN will bounce back'

NST- 30/3/2008

■ By Lee Keng Fatt
and S. Aruldas
news@nst.com.my

BUTTERWORTH: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said it was not impossible for the Barisan Nasional (BN) to retake Penang in the next general election.

Abdullah said the BN would bounce back stronger than ever.

"I am confident we will recover and be many, many times better."

To do that, Abdullah said the BN coalition needed to work harder and strengthen unity to face the situation it was now in.

"This is what we need to do. It is not impossible to regain control of the state government."

Abdullah, who is the member of parliament for Kepala Batas, said BN understood and had accepted the results of the recent general election.

"We listen and take note of what has been told to us.

"We will also not run away from our duties," he said at a thanksgiving dinner hosted by the state Umno liaison committee in Sungai Dua last night.

This is the first time he was returning to his home state and constituency since the March 8 polls.

Abdullah, who is also the state party chief, said there were valuable lessons to be learnt from the defeats, particularly the loss of Penang and three other states.

Also present among the audience of 5,000 were Second Finance Minister Tan Sri Nor Mohamed Yakcop, who is the member of parliament for Tasek Gelugor, and acting Gerakan presi-



Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi being greeted by Lim Guan Eng (centre) and Deputy Chief Minister Mohamad Fairus Khairuddin (right) at the Bayan Lepas International Airport yesterday.

dent Tan Sri Dr Koh Tsu Koon.

Abdullah said BN and Umno should work hard to regain their pre-eminence.

He reminded the 11 Umno representatives that they were now in the opposition but still had a role in helping the rakyat.

Their participation in the state legislative assembly should not be confined to representing the Malay community but the non-Malays as well, he said.

He also touched on the New Economic Policy, saying it was applied by the government to eradicate poverty and ensure a fair distribution of wealth among all the communities.

Meanwhile, Bernama reports that Abdullah lashed out at the Penang government for adopting a fully open tender system as it did not guarantee fairness to those who were financially weak to compete.

He said in principle the proposal by the state government to emphasise on equitability appeared to be good but this would actually result in only those who were financially strong benefiting.

"The transparency, open tender and open bidding approach is certainly good and gives comfort to everyone but we have to remind them that not everything that is said to be equitable is fair.

Actually, only the strong and those with financial capacity will benefit from it.

"This is our reminder to them because it is our (Barisan Nasional's) responsibility as the opposition (in Penang) to give our views and we will become an opposition that is active, sensitive and concerned about what is happening in Penang. We are not around just to keep the seat warm."

Abdullah was earlier greeted by his constituents upon arriving at his family home in Jalan Perak in Kepala Batas and by Chief Minister Lim Guan Eng and other dignitaries at the Bayan Lepas International Airport.