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THE STAR

DATE: 03/04/2008

I am not stepping down, says Prime Minister

PUTRAJAYA: Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi has denied speculation that he will step down as Prime Minister.

He reiterated his stand that he would not run away from his responsibilities as the Prime Minister.

"I am here. I am here. I am here. They speculate that I want to run away, I've resigned. Why should I resign?"

"My Government has got a strong majority (although) not the two-thirds (majority), but very strong ... that is the stand of support.

"Why must I run away from my

entrusted responsibilities?" he asked after a 45-minute meeting with Terengganu Menteri Besar Datuk Ahmad Said at his office here.

Speculation on the matter arose following calls by some leaders, including Abdullah's predecessor Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, that he should step down to assume responsibility for the Barisan Nasional's poor showing in last month's general election.

Barisan lost its long-held two-thirds majority in Parliament after winning only 140 of the 222 parliamentary seats while the Opposition captured 82 seats.

The Star - 3/4/2008

Barisan also lost control of Penang, Perak, Selangor and Kedah besides failing to regain Kelantan from PAS.

Abdullah's few public appearances lately also added credence to the speculation.

On his meeting with Ahmad Said, the Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said he was satisfied with the Terengganu state exco list submitted by the Menteri Besar.

"We ensured that all the districts in Terengganu were represented in the line-up. That is important," he said. - Bernama

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PRIME MINISTER DATUK SERI
ABDULLAH AHMAD BADAWI