

THE SUN

DATE: 01/04/2008

PM TAKES AIM AT CRITICS, SAVING HIS BEST SHOTS FOR MAHATHIR

Abdullah fires back!

Embattled Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi responded with guns blazing yesterday, taking aim at those who blamed him for Barisan Nasional and Umno's poor performance in the recent general election.

The Umno president, who faced a barrage of stinging and personal attacks in the wake of the punishing polls, returned fire at detractors, saving the best shots for his predecessor and

chief critic Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad. Also in the firing line were Umno veteran and president-wannabe Tengku Razaleigh Hamzah and self-proclaimed "prime minister-in-waiting" Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim.

Speaking after addressing 1,000 Umno grassroots leaders at the PWTC, Abdullah also disclosed that BN lost its two-thirds majority in Parliament and control of five states because of "sabotage by Umno members".

On **Tun Dr Mahathir's** criticisms



He is misusing his strength. When we won in 2004, he said BN was *kuat sangat, tak elok* (too strong, it was not appropriate) and there must be opposition.

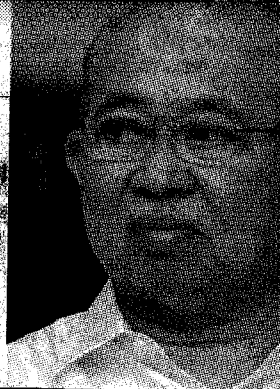
But when the Opposition rose, I thought he would celebrate but he *hentam pulak* (attack instead). So attaining great success was a mistake, and to secure a slim win is also a mistake. What is it that can be accepted?"

People say I'm *lembik* (weak) and talk as if the ministers and the cabinet

are made up of stupid people and that Khairy (Jamaluddin, his son-in-law) is the only smart one. These allegations seem to have no limits! It's just blindly accusing (the leadership). Didn't we have limitations before? I know. Reporters were called in with Tun Mahathir when he took over as prime minister and were told not to write about Tun Hussein (Onn). Who was responsible for *Ops Lallang*? Some people can be given coverage while some others were not to be given coverage. These were instructions issued from time to time."

On **Tengku Razaleigh**

He should be more responsible and look at Kelantan. Instead of working together and helping us wrest Kelantan, it is because of him, we lost support there."



On **Anwar Ibrahim**

(Najib) sees himself as my successor, not as an alternative leader. — like Anwar is saying he is the alternative leader to Mahathir ... He (Anwar) can wait. I am the leader today."

