

**More Independents Contesting Augers Well For BN, Says Abdullah  
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KEPALA BATAS, April 20 (Bernama) -- Former prime minister Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi describes the emergence of more independent candidates whether in the state or parliamentary constituencies in Penang as a good sign for the Barisan Nasional (BN) to achieve a big victory in the 13th general election.

He said the presence of many candidates would lead to a split in the votes in the opposition pact strongholds and the people too would have a wider choice in voting for the best leader.

"The outcome (of the presence of more independents) can be better for us (BN). We hope they (BN party workers) will work hard and can convince the people that we are prepared to serve the people because that is our responsibility," he said when approached by reporters at the Nomination Centre at the Kepala Batas Industrial Training Institute, here today.

Abdullah, who is also the Kepala Batas Umno division head, said he would go all out and give his full support to all the four Umno candidates contesting in the constituency.

"Insya Allah (God willing), we will win because we have made careful preparation and I call on the people to evaluate wisely because all our candidates are locals and not outsiders whom we have never met before," he added.

Meanwhile BN candidate for the Kepala Batas parliamentary seat Datuk Seri Reezal Merican Naina Merican wants to continue the legacy of former prime minister Tun Abdullah Ahmad Badawi by bringing a quantum leap in development for its people.

The former political secretary of Abdullah, who was the incumbent for the seat, said his association with the former prime minister had put him in good stead to do the job.

"I will ensure that not a single person is sidelined from each development programme planned by the BN for Kepala Batas," said Reezal, who is also Umno Youth Information chief.

He said Kepala Batas constituents were fortunate to have had Abdullah as their MP for seven terms and that he considered it his duty to continue Abdullah's legacy. He is being challenged by PAS' Afnan Hamimi Taib Azamudden.

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