

Power-sharing

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Abdullah: Barisan seat distribution in true spirit of co-operation

BY NICK LEONG AND IZATUN SHAARI

KUALA LUMPUR: The Barisan Nasional has finalised the allocation of seats among its 13 component parties and the speed with which this was done is testimony of the coalition's true spirit of power-sharing, declared its chairman Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

"I am pleased and thankful to God because everything went on smoothly. There were no threats and bad feelings among the party leaders," he told reporters after an Umno supreme council meeting at Menara Datuk Onn here yesterday.

Abdullah, who is Prime Minister, said he had expected "a tough and cantankerous" discussion with the party leaders but was instead pleasantly surprised.

He said the goodwill and understanding among the party leaders boded well for the future of the coalition.

"We achieved a high level of understanding and commitment during the discussions. It shows our commitment to sharing power," he said.

He added that with the settlement of the seat allocation issue, the Barisan was now ready to go to the voters for a fresh mandate.

Abdullah, who had earlier chaired a Barisan supreme council meeting, spoke at length about the kind of candidates he wanted for the elections.

"The most important criterion is that they must be able to serve the *rakyat*. It does not matter if the candidates are young or old, men or women," he said.

Abdullah said he had directed all Barisan component parties to submit their lists of candidates to him by tomorrow.

"I must have the lists of the possible candidates by the day after tomorrow (Saturday) to ensure that nothing could jeopardise the coalition," he said.

He said the final list would be released after he had discussed the candidates' list with Umno state liaison chiefs and Barisan component party leaders.

Abdullah, who is acting Umno president, said aspiring members



Now showing

A poster of Prime Minister and Barisan Nasional chairman Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi with his now famous line 'Do Not Work For Me But Work With Me' pasted on the board of an old cinema at Komtar in Penang. Pen-Urus Harta Sdn Bhd, the company which manages the 65-storey Komtar, put up the poster yesterday. Pen-Urus Harta project supervisor Shaik Ismail Allar said the poster was put up as a show of support for the Prime Minister. — STARpic by GOH GAIK LEE

Abdullah: Don't do things to create conflict

The Star - 5/3/2004

● FROM PAGE 1

who were not selected should not undermine the coalition.

"Do not say you will leave it to the party leaders and then say, 'Choose me'.

"If we are not selected, we will be disappointed but we know how to control ourselves. Do not do things that will harm the party, or create conflict," he said.

He said candidates were merely agents of the coalition contesting in the elections.

On whether any Cabinet ministers had expressed the intention not to seek re-election,

Abdullah said he would not stop those who wished to quit if they felt that they had been in service for too long, were tired or not healthy enough to carry out their responsibilities.

"*Kalau ada sesiapa nak berhenti, berhentilah. Saya tidak akan halang* (If there are those who wish to quit, they can quit. I will not stop them.)"

Abdullah said some ministers had told him of their intention not to seek re-election, adding that it would not be appropriate for him to name them now.

Asked whether any Mentris

Besar would be contesting in parliamentary seat, he said: "We don't know yet."

On his feelings about chairing the Barisan and Umno supreme council meetings on the elections as the Prime Minister, he said:

"This is my first experience but I'm happy. The intention of the component party leaders to co-operate for the common good of the coalition impressed me. Even Datuk Seri Najib (Tun Razak) was impressed."

Asked about the content of the Barisan manifesto, Abdullah said: "We discussed matters

that will be included in the manifesto. We will prepare and issue it at the right time." To a query about PAS' intention to target his son Kamaluddin for being a shareholder of Scomi Precision Engineering Sdn Bhd in the alleged production of components which were used in Libya's uranium enrichment programme, Abdullah said:

"PAS wants to find something to attack and embarrass me. Certainly, it's not something to worry about. PAS has no issue to capitalise on."

The police in its final report to the Government cleared

Scomi and Scope of any wrongdoing as they were not involved in the black marketing of components for nuclear weapons. The two companies, according to the investigations, were duped into tooling the components which they thought were to be used for the oil and gas industry.

The police also urged the International Atomic Energy Agency to probe several middlemen from Europe who had been implicated as being involved in a loose network responsible for the proliferation of nuclear weapons.