



BARISAN PLEDGE: Abdullah addressing the crowd at the launch of Barisan Nasional's general election machinery at the Malacca International Trade Centre yesterday.

'BN won't make personal attacks'

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MALACCA: The Barisan Nasional will not make personal attacks against leaders of opposition parties as the coalition believes it is not proper, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said.

He said Barisan and Umno's practice did not involve "attacking" leaders as it was against Islamic principles.

"We realise that such practices are not good and there is no need for us to follow suit," he said when asked to respond to PAS president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang's personal attack against him on Saturday.

Abdullah was speaking at a press conference after launching the Gabungan Pelajar Melayu Semenanjung (GPMS) foundation at the Malacca International Trade Centre (MITC) yesterday.

The Terengganu Menteri Besar had said that Abdullah was merely playing to the gallery by leading prayers during Ramadan but did not lead the prayers at his mother's funeral and instead left it to an imam.

In Pekan, his deputy Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak said the people would reject the personal attacks and the mudslinging tactics of the opposition.

"The people know how to make their own assessment of the political situation in the country," the Deputy Prime



Minister said yesterday. (see story on Page 4)

When asked on the issue of religion discussed during elections, Abdullah said it was an issue which could not be avoided.

"We must have the appropriate answers and explanations for the people. If not, unsuitable explanations can influence the *rakyat*."

"What is important is that we are careful, especially Muslims campaigning during this period, to avoid issuing decrees on faith that will result in disunity among the community," he said.

On his meeting with imams on Saturday night, he said he spoke on the role of Islam in a multi-racial country.

"We need to think about the tasks that we carry out, that they are completed well and take into consideration the sensitivities of other races."

"At the same time, we must do our best to improve ourselves as Muslims. This is done by mastering various fields

such as science and technology and medicine," he said.

Abdullah said that in the past, there were many Muslim scholars and scientists contributing to the world in their respective fields.

"This was possible as they had mastered the knowledge and created institutions of excellence which were recognised internationally," he added.

Abdullah said Muslims in the country must be successful and this could only be achieved through hard work, unity and good co-operation.

On the response to the launch of the election machinery, he said he was pleased with it.

"The morale of the supporters is very good and it gives Barisan the confidence, God willing, for a big win in Malacca," he said.

Abdullah, when asked if the list of candidates for the elections was finalised, said:

"When it is ready, I will announce it and all will be informed."

To a question on the Election Commission's proposal that March 21 should be declared a public holiday for Kedah, Kelantan and Terengganu, he said that it was up to the respective state governments to decide on the matter.