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Thousands throng PWTC for coalition's second convention

THE Putra World Trade Centre was alive with the presence of some 5,000 delegates to the Barisan Nasional Convention, held for the second time since the coalition was formed in 1974.

The PWTC area was awash in a sea of blue, as more than 4,000 flags with the BN logo and banners draped every corner of the building.

Themed "BN, Pillar of the Nation's Integrity", the convention was a grand affair witnessed by Members of Parliament, senators and State assemblymen.

It did not matter that the convention lacked the carnival-like atmosphere which is customary of Umno general assemblies.

What was important was that it was a significant platform for BN leaders to instil a higher degree of unity in its component parties.

The 13 BN-component parties are the United Malays Nasional Organisation, Malaysian Chinese Association, Malaysian Indian Congress, Gerakan, Sabah United People's Party, Sabah Progressive Party, Liberal Democratic Party, United Pasok Momogun Kadazandusun Organisation, Sarawak National Party, Sarawak United People's Party, Parti Bansa Dayak Sarawak, Malaysian People's Progressive Party and Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu.

BN chairman and Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, who arrived at 9am, was greeted by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, BN secretary-general Tan Sri Mohamed Rahmat and leaders of the BN component parties.

He was led to the Merdeka Hall and soon after the convention commenced with the raising of the BN flag and the singing of the BN theme song.

Dr Mahathir later took to the rostrum and delivered his keynote address which lasted about 90 minutes.

Leaders of the BN component parties were then given the opportunity to deliver their speeches in response to the BN chairman's keynote address, followed by Dr Mahathir's winding-up speech before the close of the convention.

Prior to the closing ceremony, a book on the BN, Balancing Communal Rights, was launched in a coffee-table edition, paperback and Video Compact Disc (VCD).

Produced by the BN headquarters, the book was not made available to the public but may be sold openly later to recoup costs should the situation warrant it.

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