

02/05/2003

Abdullah: Coalition stays strong

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KUALA LUMPUR, Thurs. - Acting Barisan Nasional chairman Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said today the coalition remains strong despite problems faced by some of its component parties.

He said BN was able to remain strong since its formation decades ago because its leaders, despite representing various races, were willing to co-operate in solving issues.

Addressing more than 5,000 delegates to the Federal Territory MIC convention at the Putra World Trade Centre, the acting Prime Minister said Malaysia was able to progress rapidly as the people emulated the traits of the BN leadership.

"BN practises leadership by example. Component parties representing various groups in the country show how they can work together in developing the country.

"And because there is unity among the people, Malaysia continues to remain stable and peaceful, allowing development to take place," he said.

Among those present were FT BN chairman Datuk Tengku Adnan Tengku Mansur; MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu; deputy president Datuk S. Subramaniam; MIC senior leaders and representatives from BN component parties.

Abdullah said BN was strong because it also practised tolerance and decisions were made through consensus.

"All members are satisfied, that's why no one wants to leave. In fact, more want to join."

He said although BN was led by Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamad, an Umno leader, everyone accepted him as a leader for all Malaysians as he did not only champion Malay interests.

Abdullah reminded the delegates that BN would be weakened if its component parties had many internal problems to contend with.

"The strength of the coalition lies in the strength of member parties. If they are strong and united, BN will also emerge strong and united. The opposite will happen if component parties are not united and weak."

Praising the MIC, he said although the party represented a minority group, its stability had helped strengthen BN.

Abdullah said Malaysian unity was once again demonstrated in facing challenges arising from the invasion of Iraq by the United States.

He said the country remained calm and peaceful although some anti-war demonstrations were held.

"It shows that Malaysians are peace-loving. Their solidarity is again shown when many donated money to ease the suffering of the Iraqis."