

PM: I cannot implement all reforms
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Beh Lih Yi

Abdullah Ahmad Badawi has conceded that he could not implement all the reforms that he had promised but vowed to do his best before stepping down as premier next March.

He noted that there are people who have wanted to see the reforms being implemented as soon as possible but said he could not do so within his short premiership. Abdullah took office in 2003.

gerakan agm 111008 abdullah pc03.jpg "We have promised many things that we want to do for the people. The 2004 election manifesto was well-received and we have promised to bring changes but I can't implement all," Abdullah said in his keynote address at the annual Gerakan congress in Kuala Lumpur today.

However, he was quick to add that he will honour his promise in carrying out reforms with regard to the judiciary, anti-corruption agency and police before he relinquishes his post.

The outgoing premier, who will be succeeded by his deputy Najib Abdul Razak under a transition plan next March, stressed that the 2004 manifesto was not meant to be carried out in one election term, or five years.

"It's a roadmap to achieve Vision 2002 finally," he added.

Najib was among 2,000-odd BN leaders and Gerakan delegates present at the Gerakan event held its headquarters in Cheras this morning.

The PM-designate's presence was seen as a 'surprise' as BN parties' annual meetings are usually attended by the prime minister and other leaders of component parties.

'Why are we acting like losers?'

In his 30-minute speech, Abdullah said he could not understand why certain BN leaders were acting like they have lost the March general election.

"Sometimes I feel sad, sometimes I feel more funny than sad because the parties which failed to form the government are acting like they had won the elections while we act like we have lost," said the premier in a cynical tone.

gerakan agm 111008 abdullah.jpg "Sometimes we forget that we have won the elections, it's just that we have lost the two-thirds majority," he pointed out.

The prime minister also said he was asked by foreign leaders what was so important about the two-third majority.

"They said (the BN's election results) for them can be considered a landslide victory. Whatever they are saying, we take the electoral results as a reminder for us to improve and to avoid being arrogant and making the people angry," Abdullah pointed out.

At a press conference later, Abdullah was asked whether he will abolish the draconian Internal Security Act that allows for indefinite detention without trial as his legacy.

Gerakan has called for the tough security law to be reviewed.

"Don't talk about my legacy. I am not here to create a legacy for me," replied Abdullah.

"This is a matter that we have to study very carefully. Some said it should be abolished, some said we have to review it. People have different idea but at the moment I want to focus on the reforms," said the prime minister.

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