

Mandate to serve

Barisan can do more with bigger victory, says Abdullah

MALACCA: Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi has appealed to voters to give a bigger mandate to the Barisan Nasional, saying the coalition will use the trust to serve all Malaysians better.

"I want to make a pledge in front of you that if you give us a bigger mandate, we will run the country as well as we can for the people and country.

"This will be our combined effort to make Malaysia a progressive and prosperous nation," he told several thousand Barisan election "workers" at the Malacca International Trade Centre yesterday.

The Prime Minister said a bigger win would give Barisan the confidence to continue its policies and development plans, as well as to work harder for the people.

"The spirit displayed by Barisan election workers here should spread ail over the country," said Abdullah, adding that he was confident that the Barisan would win with a bigger majority in Malacca.

While launching the *Gabungan Pelajar Melayu Semenanjung* (GPMS) foundation, Abdullah said youths are the assets of the nation and had to be treated with care.

"This important asset must be safeguarded as they will become the executive, political and corporate leaders of the future," he said, adding that the corporate sector and non-governmental organisations should find ways of providing school dropouts the opportunity to pursue knowledge in other fields.

He, said youths should not be neglected as they would be the leaders in 2020.

Later in Butterworth, Abdullah said democracy was very much alive in the country as the people were given the right to choose a government every five years.

He said Malaysians were lucky as they could freely choose the government of their choice, unlike in some

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ROUSING WELCOME: Abdullah reaching out to the crowd from a moving vehicle on his arrival at the Malacca International Trade Centre to address Barisan Nasional election workers yesterday. The crowd, who turned up in the thousands, gave the Prime Minister a rousing welcome. Among those who accompanied him were Information Minister and Umno secretary-general Tan Sri Khali Yaaakob (fourth from light) and Malacca Chief Minister Datuk Seri Mohd Ali Rustam (second from right). - *Bernamapic*

PM: Important to pick an effective govt

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countries where the people resort to street violence before any election.

"It is therefore important for the people to use their rights wisely and pick a government that can serve them effectively.

Abdullah said it did not matter what some people said about him because, at the end of the day, the people would be the judges.

"The general election very important as the people would assess the performance of the govern-

ment as well as their leaders.

"The people have to think wisely when assessing this performance and the assessment can serve as a guide before they make a decision," he told some 7,000 people at a meet-the-people gathering at the branch campus of the Universiti Teknologi Mara (UiTM) here.

The gathering, in the Permatang Pauh parliamentary constituency, was significant to Barisan as opposition Parti Keadilan Nasional currently holds the seat.

Abdullah said on the way to the function he noticed that the opposition was also in the "flag war", ahead of the March 21 general election.

"I thought I would only see flags depicting the scale (the Barisan symbol). But there were the eye (Keadilan) flags. Even the moon (PAS flag) is shining. Thank you for giving me the warm welcome," he quipped.

About 200 opposition supporters outside the UiTM main gate also waved the PAS and Keadilan flags when they saw Abdullah arriving at the venue.