

Building on past glory

Govt to continue with growth agenda for nation



DATUK Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who took over the premiership from Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad last October, said his objective now is to continue building from past achievements and to attain greater success for the nation.

Presenting his first Budget as head of the government and finance Minister, Abdullah said the former Prime Minister had made "invaluable contributions towards the nation's remarkable growth".

His government, said Abdullah, would continue to promote growth and provide an enabling environment of opportunities in various economic activities for the *rakyat*.

"I am determined to ensure that every *rakyat* will be able to live in peace and harmony, regardless of race, religion and status.

"This is my aspiration, my objective and my pledge to you," said Abdullah, who led the ruling Barisan Nasional coalition to a thumping win in the March general election.

Not forgetting the mammoth support given by the voters, he said; "The Government is committed to fulfil all promises made in the Barisan manifesto."

The Prime Minister said next year sets the stage for the Ninth Malaysia Plan, as the economy continues to grow from strength to strength.

Abdullah called on Malaysians to transform the way of doing things and re-focus on key strategic areas, adding that outdated work systems and legislations needed to be revamped and a positive culture, inculcated; to improve competitiveness and position Malaysia to be at par with developed countries.



IN JOVIAL MOOD: Abdullah and his deputy Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak arriving at Parliament House to present Budget 2005 with Second Finance Minister Tan Sri Nor Mohamed Yacop right behind them.

"Hence, developing human capital, increasing productivity, enhancing research and development (R&D) capabilities and identifying new sources of growth are indeed crucial. "Ensuring a dynamic private sector is another major challenge in our efforts to increase the nation's resilience. The Government will focus on promoting growth and at the same time gradually reduce the fiscal deficit. This will ensure continuity and sustainability of growth."

The Prime Minister said the nation continues to progress, advance and

attain success on the basis of its own approaches.

He was thankful to God and proud of the country's achievements, which he said were due to the people's perseverance and diligence in pursuing development.

Advising Malaysians not to be complacent – given the increasingly challenging global environment coupled with rapid globalisation and liberalisation – he reminded that it was the responsibility of everyone to acquire knowledge, increase self-reliance and competitiveness to con-

front any challenges.

"Economic strength and advancement must be seen in the context of achieving prosperity and strengthening the social fabric.

"To create a great civilisation, it is important to strike a balance between material and spiritual achievements. We must endeavour to enrich our souls. Tradition, culture and religion must not be obstacles to success.

"On the contrary, they must serve as bridges for us to move forward and elevate our dignity and stature in the eyes of the world."