

DATE: 22/10/2007

Abdullah: BN is success story of all Malaysians

NST- 22/10/2007



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi talking to Datuk M. Kayveas at PPP's 54th annual general assembly at the Putra World Trade Centre yesterday.

■ **By Regina Lee and
Sonia Ramachandran**
news@nst.com.my

KUALA LUMPUR: The Barisan Nasional is for all and not for a few, the prime minister said.

Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said that if the BN had been set up along exclusive lines, it would have met an early death and not have survived the elections.

"Our government is the success story of all Malaysians. The BN is not a party of the rich, nor one of a single religion or race," he said at the 54th annual general assembly of the People's Progressive Party (PPP) at the Putra World Trade Centre yesterday.

"It is a multiethnic and multi-religious party. This is our strength and not something that divides us. This diversity makes

our party excel. We represent citizens of all races from all corners of the country, irrespective of rich or poor."

Abdullah was responding to PPP president Datuk M. Kayveas who said that he hoped the BN government would not be "a government of a few for a few and by the few" and that hardworking families would not be rendered invisible to it.

Saying that this was "totally wrong", Abdullah described the BN as a coalition whose component members worked with one heart and one voice.

"Other parties strive to be like us but have never succeeded. We did, and we have proven that the BN is a party that is capable of making Malaysia a developed and successful nation," he said to thunderous applause.

Abdullah said people would

have more faith in the BN if it continued to remain strong and united.

"People don't like to see us fight within the BN as people don't like to see brothers quarrelling among themselves.

"They would say the family is not stable. The opposition would want us to be divided. Our strength does not only come from successful development projects but the spirit of co-operation we have among us. We need this for the future of the country and people."

On Kayveas' request for at least one seat from each state, Abdullah said this would be considered.

"Kayveas said a letter had been sent to the BN management committee and I said 'good'. We will consider it."

Kayveas said the four parliamentary and 12 state seats the

PPP won in the 1969 election before it joined the BN had been given away to other BN parties.

Taiping, the sole parliamentary seat contested by PPP in 2004, was won by Kayveas, but it lost the Pasir Berdamar state seat in Perak to the DAP.

Kayveas also said the yearly administration fees imposed by the National Higher Education Fund Corporation (NHEFC) on students were tantamount to interest.

Since the NHEFC was a revolving fund, he asked the BN to abolish the fees and for loans to be disbursed without any charges, interest or fees.

To this, Abdullah said: "Administration fees camouflaged as interest? Don't twist those words. If the fees bring hardship to the students, then I'm prepared to look at it."