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PM shares views on outcome

Abdullah says younger generation of voters has different aspirations

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PUTRAJAYA: Following is an extract of Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi's interview with Bernama TV (BTV) commentator Sharkawi Jirim at Seri Perdana, here yesterday.

The 30-minute interview covered various matters related to the 12th general election last Saturday, including Abdullah's explanation of the reasons for the Barisan Nasional losing its two-third majority in Parliament.

BTV: Based on the outcome of the recent general election, perhaps Datuk Seri could give an explanation of the results.

PM: I accept in good faith the decision of the people, which determined the position of the (political) parties which participated (in the general election). Secondly, I have acknowledged that the results we secured are far different, a decline from the results of 2004.

There are reasons for this, definitely, and the primary one is that the people wanted to state that they harboured dissatisfaction in the four years that I have been leading the Government and, therefore, they wanted a change.

As such, I will implement whatever I can implement. I understand

what the people are hoping for. There may have been shortcomings and weaknesses in the implementation. These will be rectified.

BTV: Personally, what were the most demanding of the challenges in the four years of your prime ministership?

PM: Firstly, it was having to understand all the arising problems, particularly in connection with interracial relations. Along with the issues which cropped up from time to time, I had to ensure that the relations were good and there was always the feeling of mutual respect and goodwill.

»I accept in good faith the decision of the people«

DATUK SERI ABDULLAH
AHMAD BADAWI

Secondly, it was of importance to ensure that the people enjoyed peace and security. Another major problem that I am having to put up

with now is inflation, following the drastic increase in fuel prices. This is not something that is easy to deal with but we have dealt with it all this while and will continue to do so in the new administration.

Besides, the national economy must continue to grow and remain strong. What we want for our national economy is to achieve success, though a little at a time, but success which the people aspire for. Only economic strength will guarantee that we secure investments and successfully implement all the pro-

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'No intention of reappointing those who lost to Cabinet

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jects we want to carry out.

One change that has come about is that it's our young people who were voters in this general election. They have their own aspirations. What are their aspirations that we have to fulfil?

Their aspirations are not the same as those of the older people, or of the time when I was younger, 30 or 40 years ago. These differences must be identified and understood. We have to respond as best we can to their

needs so that they understand that this is the only country where they feel there is hope for a living, hope to be successful in their respective careers, hope to secure jobs.

These are the needs, which have to be attended to, and we have to address issues such as these.

I believe that in addressing issues such as these, what I have to attain is understanding and the willingness for cooperation to successfully implement the planned projects and programmes or new policies.

BTV: After the results of the elec-

tions were announced, many quarters were doubtful of Datuk Seri's position. In fact, there were those who said Datuk Seri must retire but, Datuk Seri has so far received strong support, not only from Umno but also from Barisan component parties. Your comment, Datuk Seri.

PM: I appreciate the support of the Umno leaders and members as well as the leaders of the Barisan component parties. I also understand that though the support for the BN helmed by me has declined

compared to that in 2004, the majority attained this time around is a strong majority, only eight seats fewer than the 148 needed to secure a two-third majority. It is still the trust, the mandate given to me. I will not shy away from my responsibility to implement whatever the people aspire to from what I have gathered based on their support.

BTV: What the people are talking about now is the Cabinet line-up. Perhaps, Datuk Seri could give some indication of the line-up.

PM: The Cabinet will surely be made up of leaders of integrity, capable of implementing what has been planned. Consideration must be made for the Cabinet to comprise ministers from among all the communities in the country. Also, importantly, the Cabinet will have new faces whom I will choose.

BTV: Is there any possibility of ministers who lost in the general election being reappointed based on their capability and expertise?

PM: We have no intention of reappointing those who have lost.