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Abdullah sworn in as PM

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KUALA LUMPUR, Mon. — Fatigued, victorious, yet graciously still, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi was sworn in as Prime Minister of Malaysia today.

"I swear upon Allah, peace be upon Him, that I will carry out my responsibilities with honesty, with all my strength and ability, and with complete loyalty to Malaysia, and I will defend and safeguard the Constitution."

He took this oath before his peers and colleagues and the Yang di-Pertuan Agong, watched by millions on live television. He signed four copies of his acceptance letter with the silver-gold broad-nibbed Mont Blanc fountain pen that his late mother, Datuk Kailan Hassan, had given him just months before she passed away in February.

Immaculate in his ceremonial black baju Melayu and black gold songket, Abdullah wore on his shirt another memento from his mother — five square diamond-on-white-gold buttons.

A filial son, a moderate Islamic scholar, an inclusive, honest and humble man, Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, Malaysia's fifth Prime Minister, officially took on the responsibility to watch over Malaysia today.

His election pledge was to work hard if he was given a huge mandate.

That mandate he got, leading the Barisan Nasional to its best electoral victory in history, winning back Opposition-held Terengganu and coming within a whisker of regaining Kelantan.

In other States, the green tide of Pas was pushed back, their leaders falling like tenpins.

Pas president Datuk Seri Abdul Hadi Awang was humbled and reduced

to tears with the loss of Terengganu and his own defeat in the Marang parliamentary constituency.

The haughty secretary-general Nasharuddin Mat Isa; the raucous Mohamed Sabu and Mahfuz Omar; the silver-tongued Datuk Hassan Ali and Ismail Kamus; the popular faith-healer Datuk Dr Haron Din; the bright new hopes of Pas like Syed Azman Syed Ahmad; all fell by the wayside, losing to mostly lesser-known Umno candidates.

Keadilan Nasional, which once could pretend to be the alternative to Umno, saw its defiant and unrestrained rabble-rousers Tian Chua and Saifuddin Nasution lose badly. Their only salvation, perhaps, was their president Datin Seri Dr Wan

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Azizah Wan Ismail's wafer-thin victory in Permatang Pauh.

As he promised, despite returning home in the early hours of the morning after his victory Press conference at the BN headquarters at the Putra World Trade Centre, Abdullah was up and about early, meeting his principal private secretary Datuk Thajuddeen Wahab, signing documents and looking at forming his new Cabinet and State Government line-ups.

Datuk Idris Jusoh will be the new Menteri Besar of Terengganu, as promised by Abdullah. And there will certainly be new faces in his first Cabinet. When he became Prime Minister in October last year, he inherited the Cabinet of his predecessor, Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, and made minimal changes, only bringing in Tan Sri Nor Mohamed Yakcop as the second Finance Minister.

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Oath of office

Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi being sworn in as Prime Minister before the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin at Istana Negara yesterday.

— Bernama picture

