

Saboteurs, malcontents to be weeded out

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Now, with a mandate deservedly his own, and with a fresh field of faces to choose from, Abdullah has the choice of the best people to pursue the agenda of reform he has promised Malaysians.

In the days to come, Abdullah will also be looking at post-mortems of both the BN and his own party, Umno, to look at the chinks in the armour and also weed out the saboteurs and malcontents who held the party to ransom and contributed to defeat from the jaws of victory in some seats.

Permatang Pauh is one case in point. Pasir Mas, where dissenter Datuk Ibrahim Ali spoilt the fight, giving victory to Pas, is another.

BN secretary-general Tan Sri Khalil Yaakob summed up the general sentiment when he credited the coalition's huge victory as being "99.9 per cent due to Pak Lah".

The high voter turnout, which Hadi blames for Pas' disastrous showing, was also symbolic of Malaysia's pull towards Abdullah, who had appealed for voters to turn out in numbers and give him the mandate he

needed.

His promise of cracking down on corruption, improving frontline departments and public delivery systems, a clean and more efficient administration, wealth-creating opportunities for the people and much more, secured him the support.

Abdullah was aided by a machinery boosted by enthusiastic Malaysians, young and old, who volunteered their services, and equally young people from Umno Youth and Puteri Umno, who spent the last two days of campaigning swooping down on fence-sitters to swing the vote.

Save for a handful of dissenters within his own party, there was strong support for Abdullah from the rank-and-file and the older members and leaders, such as former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir who traversed the country, soliciting support for him and the BN.

Despite foul-ups by the Election Commission, the election proceeded smoothly and the end result was beyond even the expectations of the most optimistic Umno and BN leaders.

Now, the real work begins for all who have been elected under Abdullah's auspices.