

My pledge to you

NST - 8/31/2004
- Pg. 1

Abdullah: BN will bring more prosperity if given bigger mandate

■ By Ashraf Abdullah and Sharanjit Singh
news@nst.com.my

MALACCA, Sun. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi today pledged that the Barisan Nasional will bring Malaysians more prosperity if given a bigger mandate.

He raised his right hand in oath in front of television cameras and more than 10,000 BN supporters and laid out what his administration would do if voters returned the ruling coalition to power on March 21 with a resounding victory.

Strong support would help the Government press ahead with its development plans, he told the crowd before launching the State's election machinery.

His remarks at the Malacca International Trade Centre (MITC) ground were punctuated by robust applause and shouts of "Hidup Pak Lah, Hidup BN".

The PM, elated by the response, said: "The spirit shown by you and others throughout the country indicates that we are in for a resounding victory."

In 1999, the BN comfortably retained its customary two-thirds majority in Parliament despite the fall-out from the sacking of Datuk Seri Anwar Ibrahim. The consensus now is that the BN should do better than five years ago on the back of the "feel-good" sentiment generated by a buoyant economy and a popular PM.

In an interview with *Mingguan*

Malaysia, Abdullah explained why a strong mandate was important.

"Strong support gives strength and confidence to a government. With a big mandate, I will be able to do all that I promised. I will know then that the people are with me."

In his first four months in office, Abdullah outlined his initiatives to tackle corruption, improve the delivery of public services, make the award of government contracts more transparent and turn agriculture into a new area of economic growth.

In the interview, Abdullah said a strong political mandate secured in the general election on March 21 would also consolidate Malaysia's handling of its international dealings, both politically and economically.

"I will not be made out as an unsteady leader, unsure of the backing of his own people and yet demanding that the world listen to him on this and that," he said.

Abdullah is the chairman of both the 57-member Organisation of the Islamic Conference (OIC) and the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM), which has 116 member countries.

At the MITC, he urged BN supporters to pay particular attention to details, especially during the last few days of campaigning.

"We should support the BN, whoever the candidate may be," he said.

Later, he attended an event organised by the Federation of Peninsular Malay Students (GPMS). He said it was incumbent upon non-governmental organisations and the private sector to complement the Government in ensuring that the youth received a proper education.

Praising the GPMS, Abdullah said the organisation, set up five decades ago, was committed to educating the young and making them responsible members of the society.

Abdullah was president of GPMS between 1962 and 1964, and is now its patron.

YOU HAVE MY WORD: Abdullah with his hand raised in oath during the launch of the Malacca BN election machinery in Ayer Keroh yesterday. — AFP picture