

Promise of a better future

Barisan Nasional launches election manifesto

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KUALA LUMPUR, Sun. — Barisan Nasional launched its 2004 election manifesto today with a pledge to create a better future for Malaysians and Malaysia.

Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said a vote for the coalition was an endorsement of its plan to bring the country "towards excellence, glory and distinction".

"This is our message to the people. We will certainly appreciate a strong mandate from the rakyat and we will use the mandate wisely," he said when launching the 15-page BN manifesto at the Putra World Trade Centre here.

The document contains a report card of the BN's performance since the last election in 1999 and a slew of pledges, including respect for the rule of law and a zero tolerance policy on extremism.

"Ours is a one system of government for all people. We will not tolerate divisiveness and extremism," he said, amid cheers and applause from BN members and supporters.

The manifesto sets out the coalition's plan to strengthen the economy, chiefly by turning agriculture, biotechnology and Islamic financial services into new sources of wealth.



ONE SYSTEM FOR ALL PEOPLE: Abdullah holding the Barisan Nasional manifesto, 'Towards a Malaysia of Excellence, Glory and Distinction'. With him is his deputy Datuk Seri Najib Razak. — NST picture by Rahim Rahmat

Abdullah said the BN was able to govern because it had a wealth of experience and proven capability.

He added that the coalition was looking for a strong mandate to continue with its programmes in fighting corruption, managing the economy prudently, upgrading the quality of the Government's delivery services and ensuring balanced development.

The BN, he said, was a party that

gave top priority to and supported the wishes of the people to be able to enjoy better and more rapid development.

"We have brought progress to the people without racial, religious or cultural discrimination. Everyone is part of the nation's development. No one will be excluded."

Abdullah said the BN would be private sector-friendly because it be-

lieved the private sector was an important engine of economic growth in the country.

The BN will work for a future where young Malaysians are better educated, better informed, better skilled and more knowledgeable so that they are more competitive in the face of challenges.

Three million copies of the manifesto have been distributed to all BN

election constituencies.

MCA president Datuk Seri Ong Ka Ting said he was confident Malaysians of all walks of life would support the manifesto.

"It guarantees the Malaysian people their freedom and rights."

MIC president Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu said that the manifesto showed Abdullah was resolute in "bringing the Government back to the people".