

PM: Behave, perform, deliver

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No protection for the corrupt and indolent, Cabinet told

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PUTRAJAYA, Wed. — Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi today opened the first Cabinet meeting of the new and expanded Government with a clarion call to the nation's leaders to maintain personal integrity and stay away from corruption, or face the full consequences of the law.

This was not the first time that Abdullah, whose Barisan Nasional received the resounding backing of an electorate impressed by his promise of reforms, had cautioned members of his administration to maintain their integrity and serve the people who voted them in.

Before the general election was called, during the campaign and immediately after victory on March 21, he made the same pitch, saying he would not protect the corrupt and the indolent.

The message was pressed home again today when the new administration began work to

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■ AFFAIRS OF STATE: The new Cabinet paying rapt attention as Abdullah addresses its first meeting in Putrajaya yesterday. — NST picture by Hadzme Jaafar

deliver on the promises of the BN manifesto.

Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said that Abdullah reminded Cabinet members to maintain their integrity, safeguard the image of the Government, and work as a team to deliver the goods to Malaysians.

"The Prime Minister was very firm about specific dos and don'ts," Najib said. "Essentially, the message was, you should not do anything to embarrass yourself or the Government."

"In short, the Prime Minister is very determined that the contents of the BN manifesto be fully implemented."

Abdullah also told new Cabinet members and reminded the old ones of the Cabinet code of ethics, copies of which were distributed to all, saying he expected everyone to abide by it without fail.

He was insistent that they all stay "corruption-free". As long as they worked hard and stayed clean, he said, he would stand by them, even if they made mistakes.

But if they wilfully did wrong, they would be left to fend for themselves against the forces of the law.