

Grab the opportunities in the north, says PM

• By Sharanjit Singh
sharan@nst.com.my

KEPALA BATAS: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi wants a consortium of Bumiputera companies to be established quickly to grab opportunities in the development of the northern corridor.

He said the consortium could play a major role in steering the economic, business and commercial growth in the northern corridor covering Perlis, Kedah, Seberang Prai and north Perak.

The proposal for setting up such a consortium was mooted by Penang Umno Youth and Abdullah said it was a good idea which should be acted on immediately.

He said any delays could lead to the consortium missing out on opportunities to take part in the development of the northern corridor, which is managed by government-linked Sime Darby Group.

"They (Sime Darby) already



Abdullah says Malays must not squander business opportunities

have a first draft plan to develop the northern corridor.

"The proposal by Penang Umno Youth is good and I hope they will submit their plan to form the consortium as soon as possible," he

said.

Abdullah, who is also Umno president and Kepala Batas Umno division chief, said this in his speech when officiating at the Umno Kepala Batas delegates meeting here yesterday.

The development of the northern corridor forms part of the Ninth Malaysia Plan and it covers the development of agricultural areas with a high concentration of Malays.

"These are areas which are less developed compared to other places like the Klang Valley.

"We have to develop these areas to ensure people here are not left behind in national development," he said.

Abdullah also reminded Bumiputera companies given contracts to avoid selling off their projects to others.

He said such attitudes had hampered efforts to raise the economic status of Malays.

"The Malays must take note of

this. Do not blow away opportunities that are given to you."

Meanwhile, in a related matter, Abdullah said the Penang Government should ensure a more balanced development of the State.

He noted that some places like Balik Pulau, which was a Malay majority area, were less developed compared to George Town.

"If such areas continue to be neglected, then people there would always feel they are being left out of the rapid development taking place on the island.

"I hope the State Government will pay equal attention to its backyard areas. We don't want certain areas to be left out."

Abdullah said Penang was known as "silicon island" as it had all the infrastructure, like a port and an international airport.

However, he said the administration had a lot to do in terms of helping raise the living standard of Malays in Penang.