

# Pak Lah: Nurture thinkers

**PENANG:** Universities should produce thinkers who can provide input and feedback in a productive, neutral and rational manner, said Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

He said these institutions must be able to instil a culture that promoted thinking skills and ongoing analysis.

"Universities should not be mere factories of human resource production," he said.

"They should mould intellectuals capable of answering big and small problems that may cross geographical boundaries and knowledge disciplines."

Abdullah said this in his speech when launching the Noordin Sopiee Chair for Global Studies at Universiti Sains Malaysia here yesterday.

The chair is a joint venture between the university and the Institute of Strategic and International Studies in recognition of the late Tan Sri Dr Noordin Sopiee's contribution to the nation.

The writer and scholar, who died of cancer at the age of 61 on Dec 29 last year, was from Penang.

The holder of the chair will fill the position for a two-year term, which is renewable, and will be selected after consultation with the Prime Minister and Dr Noordin's widow Puan Sri Shamsiah Md Hashim.

Meanwhile, the Prime Minister has issued a directive to civil servants entrusted to implement government policies to improve their public delivery system so that the people and pri-



**WARM WELCOME:** A large crowd greeting Abdullah at the Penang International Airport upon his arrival at Bayan Lepas for a two-day visit yesterday.

ivate sector will be able to reap the benefits announced in Budget 2007.

He said they, must improve their quality of service and take steps to overcome the people's problems.

"You must also improve networking with the private sector so that entre-

preneurs and investors can play a more effective role in the economy.

"You must facilitate and not frustrate them," he said when addressing about 200 senior civil servants, elected representatives, municipal councillors and political leaders.

Abdullah had kicked off his two-day visit to the state earlier with a briefing by state secretary Datuk Jamaludin Hasan on Penang's development.

He urged state governments to emulate the Federal Government, by ushering in development in all areas.