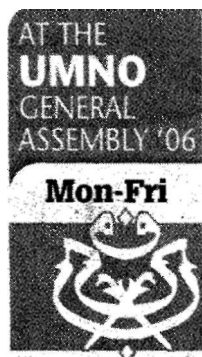


# RM600m for small jobs



**KUALA LUMPUR:** The government has allocated an additional RM600 million — or RM3 million per parliamentary constituency — for small projects which can be implemented immediately at the grassroots level.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, who announced this to applause from Umno delegates, said the amount was in addition to an earlier RM1.5 billion allocation approved for small projects under the Ninth Malaysia Plan.

Projects for the RM600 million allocation, in which grassroots leaders will have an input, have largely been identified and are mainly in rural areas.

Abdullah said he told the delegates at the traditional pre-Umno general assembly briefing that the government would strive to ensure all projects approved under the 9MP were implemented speedily.

The bigger projects, he said, would take a little longer and the effects would be felt in the longer term.

Abdullah said the new allocation followed reports he had received that most of the original projects under the RM1.5 billion allocation had either been completed or were near completion.

Present at the briefing were his deputy Datuk Seri Najib Razak

and Umno secretary-general Datuk Seri Radzi Sheikh Ahmad.

Najib told reporters later that the RM600 million allocation would give the rural economy a major boost, as well as provide more opportunities for small contractors.

Sungai Petani division chief Datuk Mahadzir Khir said the prime minister had spoken about the government's programmes and the positive impact on the economy.

According to delegates, Abdullah explained that the govern-

ment had to manage the budget deficit when he first became prime minister in 2003.

Otherwise, the economy would have suffered badly.

"He said the efforts taken by the government had managed to bring down the deficit to 3.5 per

cent from more than five per cent in 2003," said a delegate.

Abdullah also told the delegates that so far, some 31,000 projects had been awarded to Class F contractors and this would increase as more projects under the 9MP were launched.