

PM: I accept criticisms

As long as purpose is for good of the people

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KUANTAN: Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said he is prepared for criticisms, as long as they are sincere and for the good of the people.

"I am not the smartest. There are others who are smarter," he told a gathering of Pahang civil servants at Dewan Jubli Perak Sultan Haji Ahmad Shah here yesterday.

"But I am the Prime Minister and it is not wrong for me to take some time to listen to more views in order to get the best opinion."

He said some decisions were best achieved after seeking the views of several people rather than of an individual.

"Often, a unilateral decision may lead to mistakes," said Abdullah, who cited that even a *fatwa* (religious edict) stemming from discussions among many *ulamas* (religious scholars) was better than one coming from only one *ulama*."

At Cabinet meetings, he said, he gave all ministers the opportunity to air their views.

"I hold meetings that some-



CRUCIAL MESSAGE: Abdullah addressing the crowd at the Sukpa Indoor Stadium in Kuantan yesterday. — Bernamapic

times stretch (from 9am to 1pm or even right up to 2pm," he said.

"People say I don't manage time well. It is only because I seek the opinions of all my ministers. The decision I make is collective, not just based on my own views."

The prime minister reiterated the importance of sincerity in all aspects of carrying out

development projects and the national mission.

"In anything you do, you may be the cleverest and the best. But if you carry out your mission without sincerity, it means nothing," he said.

Earlier, more than 10,000 people gave Abdullah a rousing welcome at the Sukpa Indoor Stadium when he arrived for a two-day visit to the state.

In his address, the prime minister called on Malaysians to support his administration, saying there was neither room for bickering nor intimidation as the nation embarked on the 9MP.

"We must defend national unity and the close cooperation that we have forged. We have a duty to make the 9th Malaysian Plan work," he said.

On another matter, Abdullah

said Malaysia, would continue to pressure the United Nations to use whatever means to stop the fighting in Lebanon.

He said Deputy Prime Minister and Defence Minister Datuk Seri Najib Tun Razak had informed him that Malaysia was ready to send a fully mechanised battalion to Lebanon and this had been relayed to UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan.