

Pak Lah defends line-up

'Cabinet includes new faces and young professionals'

KUALA LUMPUR: Prime Minister Datuk Sen Abdullah Ahmad Badawi has defended his Cabinet line-up, saying it included many, new faces and young professionals.

"I know I have been criticised from all quarters for not doing much to change the entire Cabinet. I am not bringing in a new regime. There's only a change of leadership.

"Many of the people who are with me today have been with me for many years," he said in an interview in the *Far Eastern Economic Review's* June 3 issue.

He said there were 14 new faces in the Cabinet, who were young and talented, and among the deputy ministers were many young professionals who were, successful corporate figures.

Abdullah also said the anti-corruption campaign he had started when he took over had not grounded to a halt

"No, it's going on. But I can't be talking about it every day as if I'm a one-issue man."

On whether his move to appoint professionals to head the government-linked companies (GLCs) would upset



RULERS MEET: Abdullah and the Yang di-Pertuan Agong Tuanku Syed Sirajuddin Syed Putra Jamalullail at the 199th meeting of the Conference of Rulers at Istana Melawati in Putrajaya yesterday. - *Berنامpic*

people who expected to be rewarded for political loyalty with seats on the boards of the companies, Abdullah said there was no compromise.

It was important, he said, that "good people" be appointed to head the GLCs and sit on the boards and if politicians

were appointed, they must be professionally qualified.

He said Khazanah Nasional, the Federal Government's investment arm, would play a big role because the GLCs were in Khazanah and added that the Government hoped to eventually

transfer the Finance Ministry Incorporated shares to Khazanah. —

Abdullah said Malaysia should focus on special niches that it had an edge in, such as biotechnology and modernisation of agriculture, to drive the country's economic growth.