

Malaysia moves ahead on projects for roads, schools

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KUALA LUMPUR, Malaysia—The government will move ahead with bidding for 880 projects valued at a total of 15 billion ringgit, or about \$4 billion, under the country's five-year development plan, Prime Minister Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said.

The projects include the construction of roads, bridges and 450 primary and secondary schools, as well as rural water-supply and transportation projects under a 220 billion ringgit plan announced in March, he said in a statement.

"I want the entire government machinery to ensure that the implementation of development projects approved under the Ninth Malaysia Plan is accelerated to benefit the

people," said Mr. Abdullah, who is also finance minister.

Bids for other projects will be announced after ministries firm up the requirements, he said.



*Abdullah Ahmad
Badawi*

Mr. Abdullah's blueprint, part of

a series of five-year plans to make Malaysia a developed nation by 2020, focuses on improving infrastructure, developing poorer states and finding sources of growth to help the economy expand an average 6% a year between now and 2010.

Analysts said quick implementation of the projects will boost the economy amid fears that growth may fall below the official forecast of 6% this year because of lower overseas demand for goods and services.

Yesterday's announcement came after stinging attacks on the government by former Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad that have raised concerns that Mr. Abdullah may be too preoccupied with politics to pay sufficient attention to the economy.