

PM: Show your power by delivering the goods

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PUTRAJAYA: The Prime Minister calls them "little Napoleons". The rest of Malaysia knows this small group of civil servants not by any name but by their actions — they throw their weight around, impede progress and find pleasure in giving members of the public the runaround.

Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi yesterday took aim at the "Little Napoleons", telling them to stop their petty displays of power. He ticked off heads of department and officials who delayed giving approvals or who sat on files, telling them instead to "facilitate, don't frustrate".

He said since the people had given their backing to the Ninth

Malaysia Plan, all ministries and government agencies should work hard and implement their projects with speed, sincerity and pride.

The few who caused delays because they wanted to throw their weight around would only tarnish the Government's name, he said.

"There's no need to show how powerful you are by delaying ... I don't agree with that. Don't show power by holding back the file. Instead, show how powerful you are by quickly implementing and facilitating. Please remember this.

"There are 'little Napoleons' all over the place who like to show power by delaying things," Abdullah said in his monthly assembly address at the Finance Ministry yesterday, referring to powerful French Revolution general and ruler Napoleon Bonaparte.

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"These people do this because they think they should teach other people a lesson for making noise (raising complaints or issues). Instead, find out what the problems are. There must be a reason."

Abdullah said he was not painting all civil servants with the same brush, but there were a few who behaved this way. As the consequences affected national projects, this attitude had to be addressed.

"This group of a few causes problems to so many. We must help one another and admonish one another."

He said Malaysians had generally accepted the Ninth Malaysia Plan as comprehensive, balanced and fair to all races and regions.

"They accept it as a national mission, taking into account the various sectors and regions, and trying

to close the divide between less and more developed ones."

Chief Secretary to the Government Tan Sri Samsudin Osman said senior civil servants should heed Abdullah's advice and not use their power to "show off".

"Don't show off just because you have power," Samsudin said at Putrajaya Corporation's client's day.

"Power comes with the rank, but the rank is for the person tasked with carrying out duties and responsibilities to administer and hold the trust according to the policies set by the Government.

"Implementation (of projects and policies) is a trust. This means simplifying complex procedures to make dealing with the civil service easier for people, serving the people properly, not being rude, and not being an obstacle."