

# PM: Control and flying a kite

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BY STEPHEN THEN

**KUCHING:** Is there any similarity between political control and flying a kite? Plenty, according to Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

"If you want to fly a kite, you need to release the string and let the kite fly loose. When the kite finds its direction, then you control the string and then you manoeuvre the kite. If you hold on too tightly, the kite will spin out of control," the Prime Minister said.

Speaking to the Barisan Nasional Backbenchers Club in Santubong here yesterday, Abdullah used this analogy of flying a kite to dismiss talk that he has lost control of his charges.

"There are many who have asked me openly, 'Pak Lah have you lost control?' People are wondering because I seem to allow people to talk and criticise so much," the Prime Minister said.

But Abdullah stressed: "I don't care what people have to say about me."

"What I want is a new tradition of democracy in Parliament and in state assemblies," he said yesterday.

Abdullah said this new tradition would make Parliament more open and become a landmark tradition.

"So that when people talk about the Parliament of Malaysia, they will know that we have a good Parliament, one that is run with honour and integrity by *wakil rakyat* who are genuinely concerned about issues affecting the people," he told the Barisan Nasional Backbenchers Club in Santubong here.

Abdullah said when he gave more leverage and liberty to the

people, they must understand that their actions and performance were being monitored by the *rakyat*.

"I have informed all the MPs that I want their honest opinion on policies and mechanisms.

"In Parliament, we now have very aggressive debate on issues that affect the people. We are using the British system as an example," he said.

Abdullah said the fact that

the Ninth Malaysia Plan would be tabled in Parliament soon meant that the people would be even more keen to know what was happening in Parliament.

"The MPs must highlight the opinions of the people, understand their problems and needs and bring it to the attention of the highest administration in the country," he added.

On a related matter, the Prime Minister said he was

happy to see that Sarawak Chief Minister Tan Sri Abdul Taib Mahmud was cheerful and in high spirits.

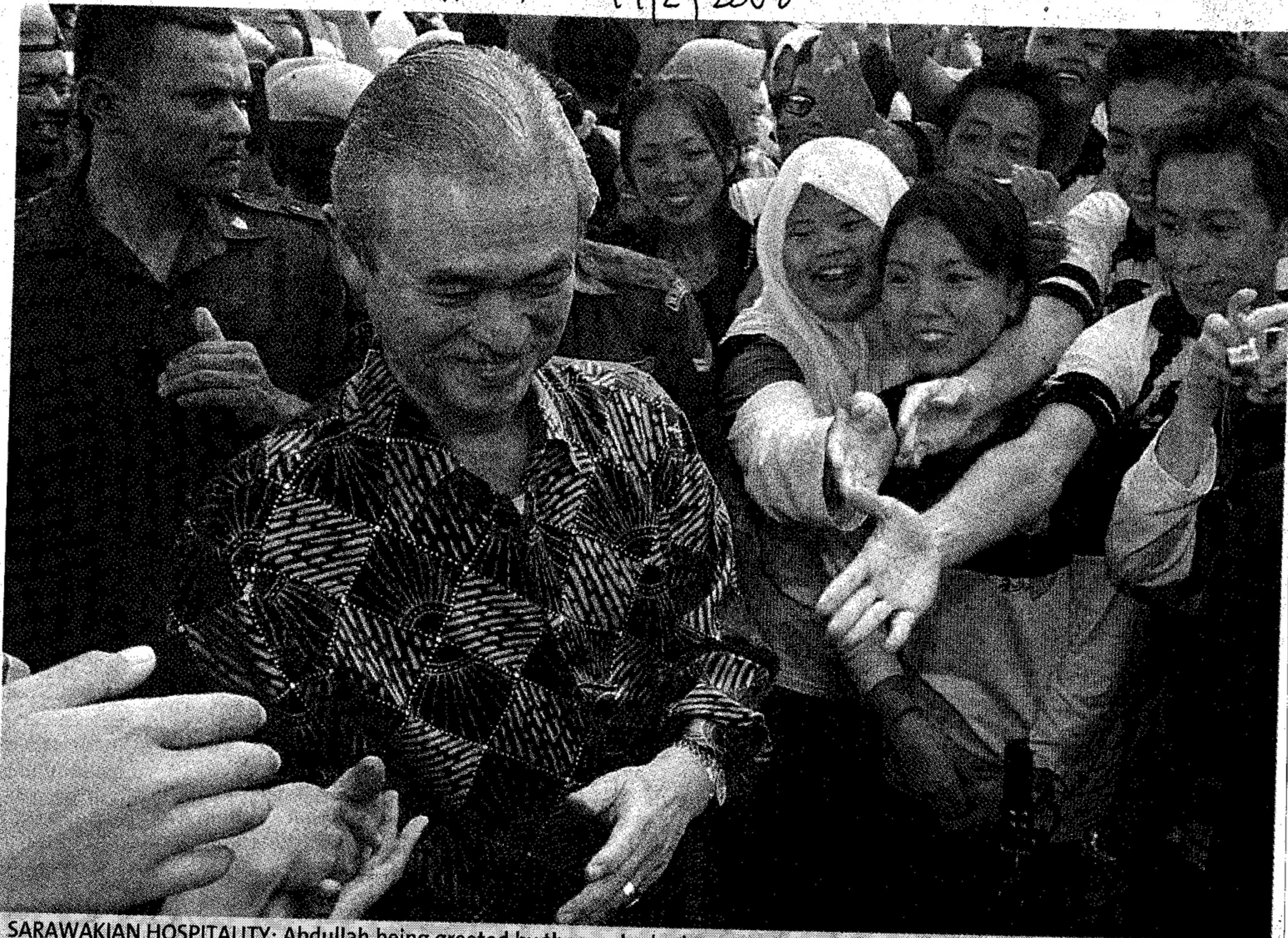
He said those who were doubtful about Taib's health and his prospects of wanting to continue to serve Sarawak should realise that he was still very keen to work for the best interests of the people in the state.

Taib, during his speech, said

Abdullah was a leader who was very tolerant and would listen to different opinions.

According to Taib, the Prime Minister had told the MPs during a close door dialogue that he was interested not just in physical development of the constituencies but he also wanted equal emphasis on human capital development.

Abdullah will return to Kuala Lumpur today.



SARAWAKIAN HOSPITALITY: Abdullah being greeted by those who had come to welcome him at the Kuching International Airport yesterday. — Bernamagic