

PM: Don't misread me

The Star - 20/5/2006

'What I am doing is help Malays become more successful'

IPOH: Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi told party veterans that they should not be taken in by his *lesu* (listless) appearance.

"I may appear listless and can't make decisions. But Veterans must understand my stand that what I am doing is to help Malays to be more successful," he said when launching the Umno Veterans Club here yesterday.

Abdullah, who is Umno president, said he was not out to make money, to feel proud nor

to seek popularity from his current position.

"The chance given by Allah is for me to improve the achievement of the Malays," he said, adding that his sincerity should not be questioned.

Abdullah described himself as a genuine Umno member, since he had never even once left the party.

He said the will passed down by past leaders may take some time to materialise but party members should not feel disheartened.

As a leader, Abdullah said he was only fulfilling the will of former Umno leaders, including those who had died.

Abdullah also welcomed constructive criticism from party veterans as it could help him discharge his duties effectively.

He likened veterans to being the head of an extended family.

"Parents may no longer hold any (party) positions, but their presence is meaningful because they have amassed invaluable experience," he said.

"They can point out our mistakes, and even scold (us). I regard these (views) as advice which can guide us to discharge our duties effectively."

Perak Mentri Besar Datuk Seri Mohamad Tajol Rosli Ghazali, in his speech, pledged undivided support to Abdullah.

He said he was not being disrespectful to former Prime Minister Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad's recent criticism on the scraping of the scenic bridge project linking Johor to Singapore.

He said everyone must rally behind Abdullah's leadership.

"There should only be one lion at the top of the mountain," he said.

Earlier, Umno Veterans Club chairman Datuk Tajudin Ali said veteran Umno members being retired professionals, scientists and businessmen, could make positive suggestions to the Government, especially to checking the spiralling cost of basic goods.

"Our views are free of charge," he said in jest.