

PM: We're making strides in fight against corruption

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KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia is making strides and not stagnating in its fight against corruption, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said.

The Prime Minister said perception indicators "would have us believe" that it was stagnating.

"Indeed, the experience of some countries has shown that stern action against corruption and the accompanying media focus is often accompanied by worsening rather than improving perception of the situation," he said in his speech yesterday at the launching ceremony of the Malaysia Anti-Corruption Academy (MACA) yesterday.

Abdullah said many challenges were to be expected when battling corruption.

Calling on everyone to work with him in the fight against graft, Abdullah said the biggest enemy of the agenda was public cynicism and apathy.

"Cynicism and apathy occurs when people do not have enough information and do not

know how to engage and participate in resolving the problem," he said.

He added it was therefore important for the custodians of integrity and anti-corruption - the Attorney-General, police, the Institute of Integrity Malaysia, and MACA - to work closely and find solutions to these problems.

Abdullah also said justice should be done in a timely manner.

"Justice will not be served if the accused, due to the sluggishness of the system, is forced to undergo a trial by the media.

"This situation is unfair, unwarranted and must be guarded against at all costs," he said.

Abdullah said the ACA had done well, investigating 1,317 cases last year, which was twice as many as in 2001. There was also a 77% increase in the number of people caught for corruption last year compared with 2001.

"What we should be proud of is that the conviction rate too has risen from less than 50% some years ago to 74% last year," he said.

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