

PM: Economy doing well, it's no artificial push

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KUALA LUMPUR: The impressive economic performance of late is not artificial, says Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

The prime minister said the government did not artificially push up the Kuala Lumpur Composite Index and that the increase was gradual and not sudden.

"When the people saw the stock exchange doing well, they supported it," he said after chairing the Umno supreme council meeting here last night. The share prices at the stock exchange were low enough to attract investors, he added.

Abdullah was asked if the government was pushing up the KLCI to give a rosy picture in preparation for an early general election.

He said both foreign and domestic investments had increased to give a combined figure of more than RM42 billion, the highest ever recorded, and that the ringgit, too, was strengthening.

"Are we (government) playing a role? No. Our economy has strong fundamentals.

"We have overcome well the problems related to the increase in oil prices. The projects that we planned are being implemented. We are not taking things lightly."

On why he always emphasised the proper implementation of projects, Abdullah said: "I will only be worried if the projects that we planned are not carried out as we had planned. When we plan something, we intend to carry it out."

He said he was also emphasising the proper implementation of projects because there were some quarters accusing the government of poor implementation.

"Let them talk. We will ensure that our implementation is orderly and produces results."

To ensure smooth implementation, the prime minister called on all *wakil rakyat* (MPs and state assemblymen) to constantly improve their services to the people.

Asked whether he had received any complaints about MPs and assemblymen, he said he did get "one or two" complaints.

He also stressed the importance of improving the public delivery system.