

Serve the people better, leaders told

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MIRI: The *rakyat* has become more demanding because they are more aware of current issues.

It is thus vital for Barisan Nasional leaders to address problems and weaknesses in everyday administration and quickly overcome them before they escalate into bigger problems, said Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

Speaking at the opening of the Parti Pesaka Bumiputera Bersatu (PBB) triennial general assembly here yesterday, the Prime Minister said the people nowadays wanted constant improvement from the Government.

"The people's appetite and needs have changed. They are more edu-

cated, more informed and aware of current local and global issues and they demand improvement from the Government all the time.

"The challenges facing us (Barisan leaders) are more difficult compared to before. Our political leaders must face these challenges. Their leadership qualities must be improved.

"Address whatever shortcomings and weaknesses we have. Whatever is lacking, we must rectify. For me, challenges are opportunities for us to improve ourselves," Abdullah told the crowd of 2,000 delegates and leaders of the Barisan component parties.

Abdullah, who is Barisan chairman, said the ruling coalition was happy that PBB had won all the seats it contested during last May's state elections and noted that overall, Sarawak Barisan had done well.

However, Barisan encountered problems before and during the state polls that had affected the outcome of the polls. (Sarawak Barisan lost in nine of the 71 state constituencies).

"Use this as a lesson that problems must be resolved fast or else they will become bigger problems."

The Prime Minister urged leaders to provide quality service to the people.

"I have stressed a lot on the importance of having good human capital. Whatever wealth we have must benefit the *rakyat*."

Abdullah expressed confidence that the people were still with the

Barisan government.

"The *rakyat* can see that we are sincere in wanting to improve their lives and have placed great emphasis on helping all races."

Abdullah called on all component members to strengthen their own parties because each of them was a vital pillar that provided crucial support to the whole Barisan entity.

On Sarawak, Abdullah said the state had done well.

Abdullah said he had discussed plans with Minister in Prime Minister's Department Datuk Seri Effendi Norwawi on ways to enhance rural development in the state.

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