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FTA talks still on, says Abdullah

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KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia is still in talks with the United States on the Free Trade Agreement (FTA), says Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi.

"It is not off. The government is going through the details on the issues raised," he told the press after launching the Pantai Sentral Park project in Bukit Kerinchi yesterday.

"Whatever we're doing, we want to achieve what is best for Malaysia. That is our priority."

Abdullah said the cabinet discussed the issue at length on Wednesday and the matter would be discussed again at next week's meeting.

Several quarters had expressed con-

cern the FTA would only benefit the Americans.

The two countries have held various rounds of negotiations in the last one year, with the latest in Kota Kinabalu last month.

On Transparency International - Malaysia's survey that the police were seen to have the lowest level of integrity, Abdullah said this was just a perception.

He said the police had shown much improvement, including in response time to emergency calls.

He said it was not right to put the blame on the entire police force.

"Rarely do people talk about the good that the police have done... They only speak about bad things. If the police are not good, I don't think we will have a

peaceful country and be safe, [but] be unhappy all the time.

"I'm not saying everybody is good. There are people who have done something very bad and are not worthy of being a member of a certain body. But they certainly don't represent the majority or the entire body," he said.

Abdullah was also asked to comment on the Committee - headed by Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak - on Approved Permits (APs), which approved 3,000 APs for tuned-up cars that did not qualify for such permits under the National Automotive Policy.

"Maybe it was given based on special reasons by the committee. However, we don't want to see such a thing to be the norms, except for a special reason," he said.