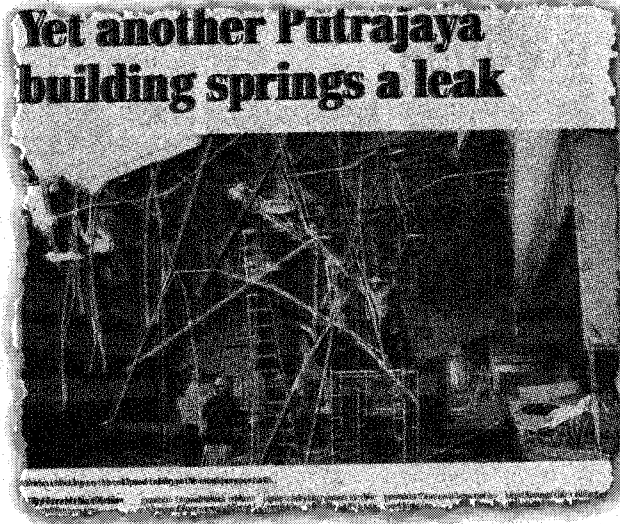


Abdullah outraged new buildings have defects

NST-1/5/2007



The NST report on the ceiling collapse at the Entrepreneur and Co-operative Development Ministry in Putrajaya.

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KUALA LUMPUR: Outraged at the discovery of embarrassing defects in new government offices, the prime minister has instructed the Public Works Department to inspect all buildings immediately.

An angry Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi issued the directive after chairing yesterday's Umno supreme council meeting.

This was in the wake of the collapse of a ceiling due to a leaky sprinkler system at the Entrepreneur and Co-operative Development Ministry in Putrajaya on Saturday and another incident yesterday in which ceiling panels in a secretary's room at the Jalan Du-

ta court complex fell to the floor from the weight of improperly installed light fixtures.

On April 11, the Immigration Department headquarters in Putrajaya was closed after water flooded the seven-storey building, also from a failure in the plumbing.

"I feel ashamed. These are new buildings and there are problems. There must be something wrong," he said.

Abdullah said the inspection was necessary as there may be buildings with concealed defects.

"The last time, we thought there would be no more problems after we had a collapse.

"At that time, we were told it was joints in the piping," he said, referring to the Immigra-

tion building, where a faulty joint in a mains pipe was blamed.

Abdullah said it was important to establish the reasons for what had happened in the three buildings.

"We don't know if this is because the contractor did not do the work properly, was careless, or the buildings were poorly designed.

"If it is the same contractor, there will be specific reasons and we will be able to take action."

The prime minister emphasised that maintenance had to be carried out continuously.

"Maintenance is very important. I have said this many times but these people, as long as nothing happens, they don't care."