

PM speaks about defects, then points to the ceiling

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KUALA LUMPUR: It was an irony.

Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi was at the VVIP room at the Putra Stadium in Bukit Jalil, and fielding questions from reporters on the defects occurring in government buildings, when he looked up.

He had noticed a defect in the ceiling to the left of the rostrum from where he was speaking.

"This is another example of neglect in maintenance.

"(Can you) see that spot which will soon become a hole and break?" he said after delivering his speech at the Workers Day gathering at the stadium here.

"If it happens now, there will be a serious accident.

All eyes in the room were on the ceiling which was defective and discoloured due to leakage.

"When there is heavy rain, there will be a major leak. You (reporters) will have more stories to write," he said in jest.

However, the message that constant attention must be given to building maintenance by those responsible was serious.

He said the government had provided a bigger allocation this year compared with previous allocations for maintenance so that buildings would last longer.

"If we don't pay attention, then defects may occur.

"And if no attention is given, in two or three years or even within one year, there will be a major defect which will affect occupants of the building.



Prime Minister Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi pointing to a defect in the ceiling at the VVIP room in Putra Stadium, Kuala Lumpur. — Bernama picture

"If the disaster occurs during working hours, what then? There will definitely be people who will suffer injuries."

He said what was important was that there should be a maintenance team to undertake inspections constantly, not only on buildings but also on facilities and equipment in the office such as computers and other machinery.

And those carrying out maintenance must have expertise and knowledge, he added.

On Thursday, Deputy Prime Minister Datuk Seri Najib Razak said the cabinet would discuss next week the order issued by Abdullah to the Public Works Department (PWD) to inspect all government buildings for defects.

He said the meeting would consider a report on the matter that would be tabled by Works Minister Datuk Seri S. Samy Vellu.

It was reported that the Works Ministry wanted to have full authority to monitor and inspect the

construction of all government buildings, as there had been cases of contractors showing reluctance to co-operate with or denying approval for PWD engineers to make inspections.

Abdullah had on Monday ordered the PWD to inspect all government buildings for defects after the ceiling in certain sections of three government buildings had collapsed, the latest being at the new Courts Complex in Jalan Duta here. — Bernama