

# BLAME GAME MUST STOP

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## ■ From Fauziah Ismail in Tokyo

THE prime minister said government departments must take charge of public properties, describing their constant squabbling to evade responsibility as shameful.

Instead of accepting blame, Datuk Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi said departments and agencies bickered in public, pointing fingers when things went wrong.

"This is embarrassing. They have to put a stop to it. It is not good," he said here yesterday.

He was referring to recent incidents of collapsing ceilings and leaky roofs

in government buildings, where departments tried to pass the buck from one to another.

The prime minister said he had informed Works Minister Datuk Seri S, Samy Vellu that the Public Works Department was in charge of the maintenance of all government buildings.

"The departments and agencies concerned must take responsibility. Whoever is responsible must know what he is responsible for and take action without being told to do so."

Acknowledging the example of Japan, where he is on a five-day visit, Abdullah said setting aside a substantial budget for maintenance was not wasteful.

"That (budget) would eventually save us money because if equipment or buildings are not maintained properly, replacing them could cost much more," he said.

On May 10, leaks were discovered in the gallery of Parliament House. Questions were then raised as to how the roof of the 44-year-old structure had been missed in the building's RM90 million renovation in 2005.

It was the latest in a series of high-profile mishaps, including burst pipes at the Ministry of Entrepreneur and Co-operative Development and Immigration Department in Putrajaya, to have highlighted the poor upkeep of government buildings.